

peter milligan · chris bachalo · mark pennington

shockTM the changing man

the american scream

"A deep and
satisfying read."
— IGN

VERTIGO

MG



shade the changing man

the american scream

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SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN: THE AMERICAN SCREAM

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THERE ARE BILLIONS OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD. AND I'M *YOUNG* AND *PRETTY* AND FANCY FREE. I'VE EVEN GOT A *MAN* WAITING FOR ME IN MY MOTEL ROOM.

BUT I'VE NEVER FELT SO *ALONE* IN ALL MY LIFE.

I'VE NEVER FELT SO *CRAZY* EITHER, AND I HAVE, IN MY TIME, BEEN PRETTY CRAZY.

I HOLD THE BOTTLE OF VODKA CLOSE TO MY CHEST AND TRY NOT TO LOOK AROUND ME. IF I DON'T LOOK THEY MIGHT ALL GO AWAY.

WE'RE IN *TEXAS*. MAYBE *THAT'S* IT. MAYBE *ALL* LITTLE TEXAN TOWNS ARE LIKE THIS.

NAH. ADMIT IT. IT'S ME. IT'S *ME*.

I'M OUT OF MY MIND?

IT'S USUALLY THE *NIGHTS*
THAT ARE HARD. I *FORGET*
NOT TO *FEEL*.

AT NIGHT I HAVE A *VISITOR*
WHO SHOWS ME *WHY* I'M *CRAZY*.
EVERY NIGHT HE COMES TO ME.

EVERY NIGHT FOR THREE
YEARS. HE NEVER MISSES.

I'LL GO BACK TO MY MOTEL AND DRINK.
THEN I'LL COMMIT A *MURDER*.

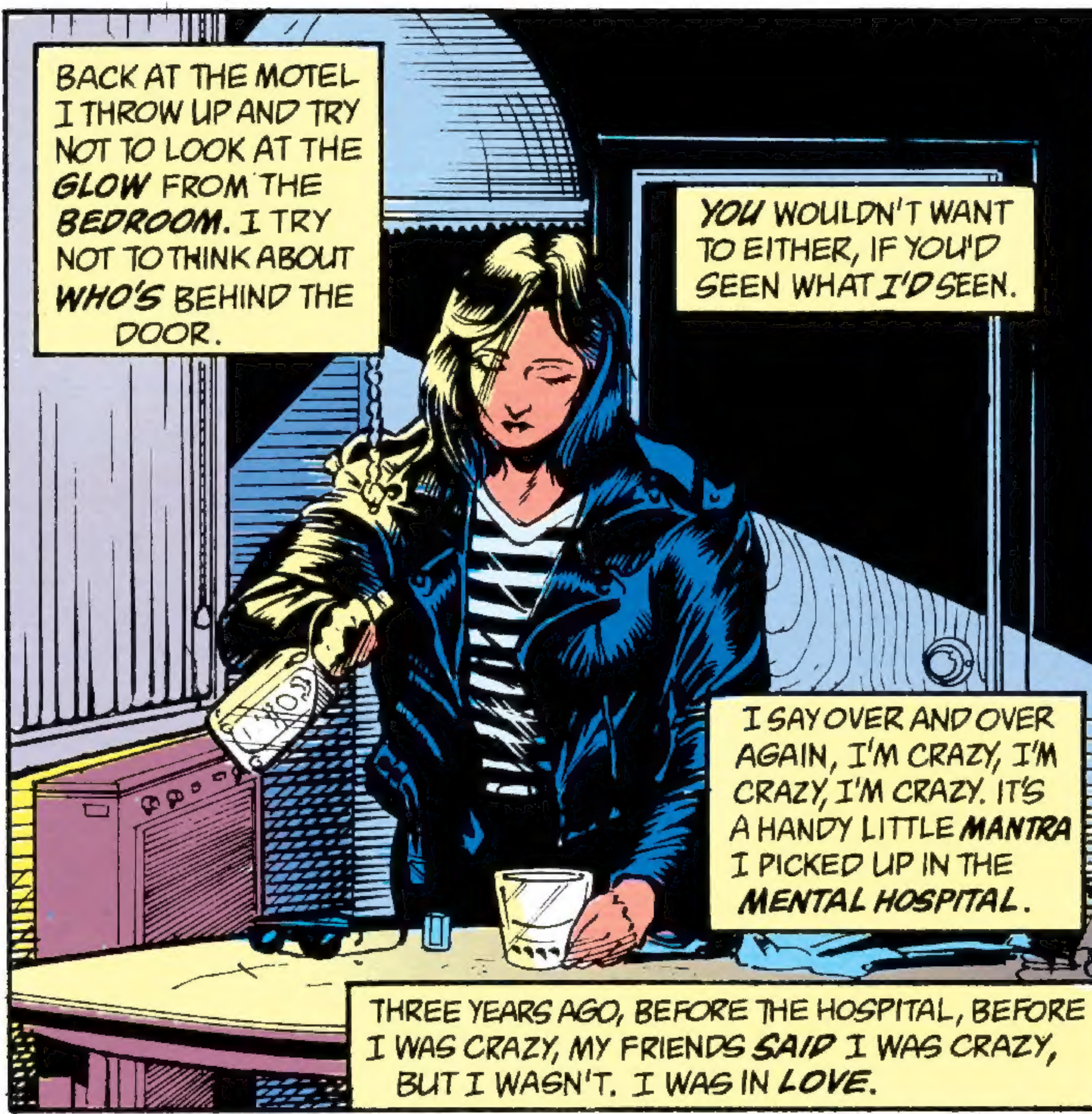
I'VE LEARNED HOW TO LIVE THIS LIFE
NOW. THE TRICK IS NOT TO *LIKE* IT.

MY NAME IS *KATHY*
GEORGE. I WISH IT
WASN'T BUT IT IS.
YESTERDAY WAS MY
TWENTY-THIRD
BIRTHDAY.

TODAY'S THE
DAY THE MAN IN
MY MOTEL ROOM
WAS *EXECUTED*.

DO YOU EVER WISH YOU
WERE *SOMEONE ELSE*?
YOU SHOULDN'T WISH
FOR *ANYTHING*.

THE TRICK IS
TO LIVE ON
THE *SURFACE*.
SKATE ON
THE *SHELL*.



BACK AT THE MOTEL I THROW UP AND TRY NOT TO LOOK AT THE GLOW FROM THE BEDROOM. I TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT WHO'S BEHIND THE DOOR.

YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO EITHER, IF YOU'D SEEN WHAT I'D SEEN.

I SAY OVER AND OVER AGAIN, I'M CRAZY, I'M CRAZY, I'M CRAZY. IT'S A HANDY LITTLE MANTRA I PICKED UP IN THE MENTAL HOSPITAL.

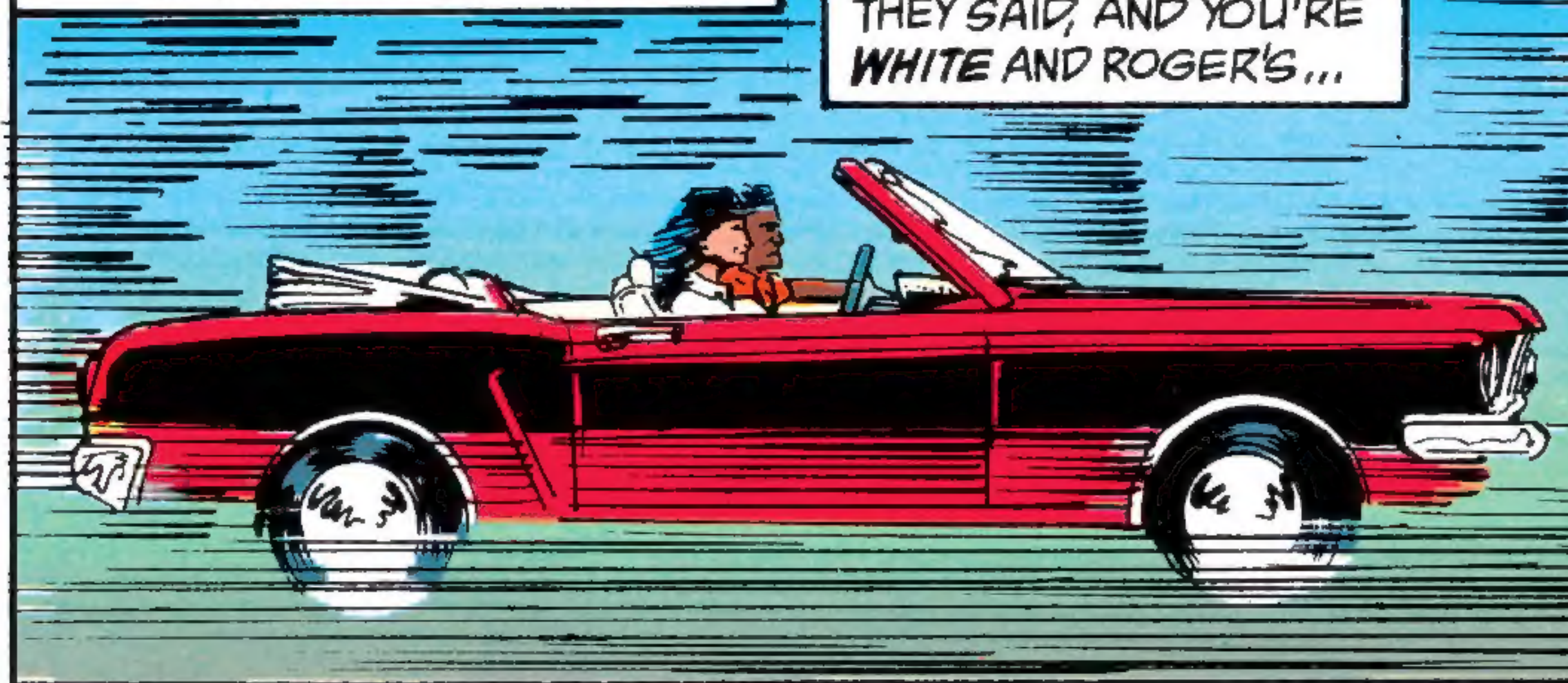
THREE YEARS AGO, BEFORE THE HOSPITAL, BEFORE I WAS CRAZY, MY FRIENDS SAID I WAS CRAZY, BUT I WASN'T. I WAS IN LOVE.



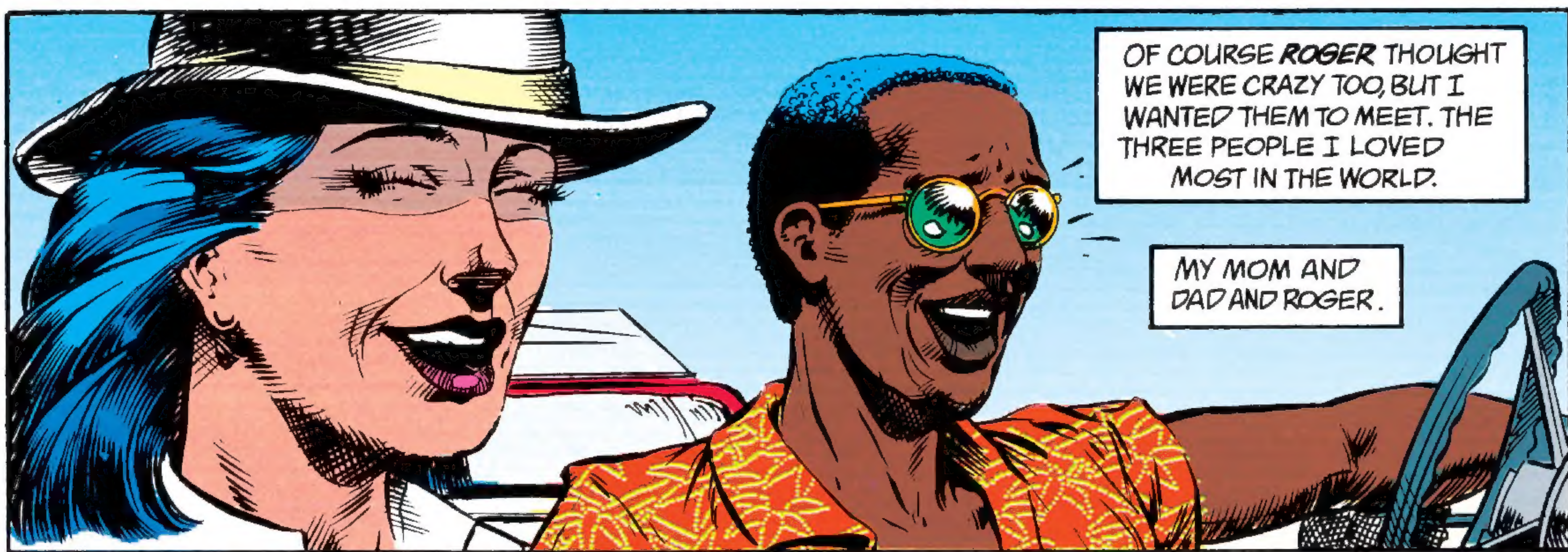
AT LEAST I THOUGHT I WAS IN LOVE, WHO KNOWS?

THEY SAID WE WERE BOTH CRAZY GOING TO LOUISIANA.

IT'S STILL THE SOUTH, THEY SAID, AND YOU'RE WHITE AND ROGER'S...

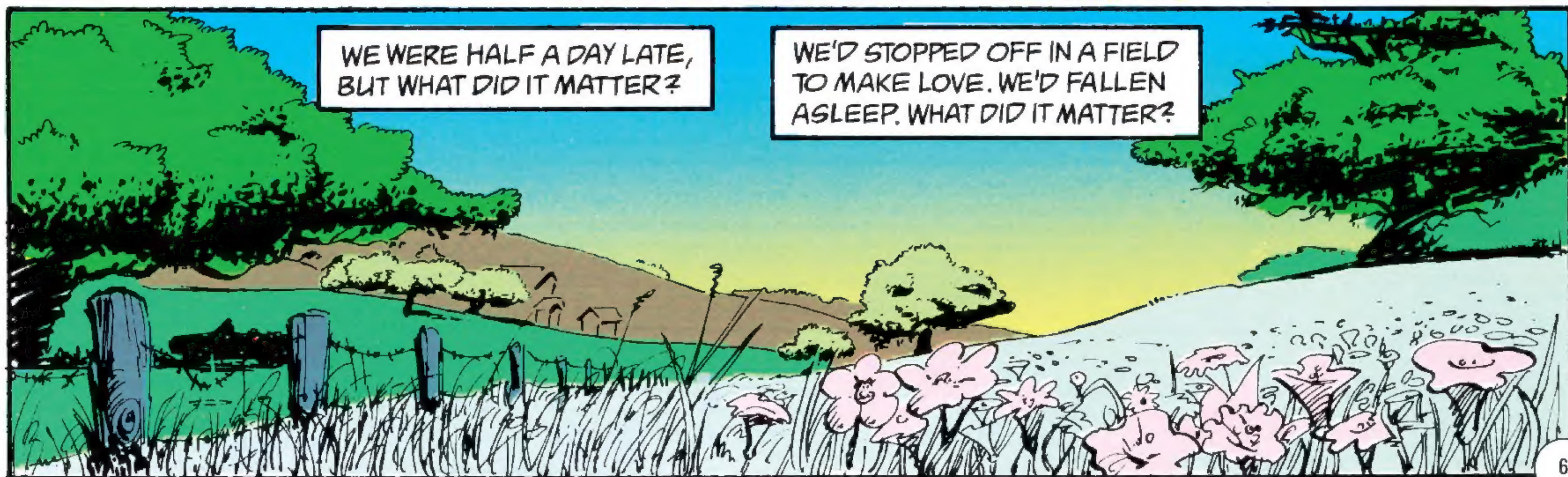


THEY USUALLY LEFT THE WORD BLACK UNSPOKEN OR MOUTHED IT SILENTLY LIKE YOU DO WITH "ADULT" WORDS WHEN YOU'RE TALKING NEAR CHILDREN.



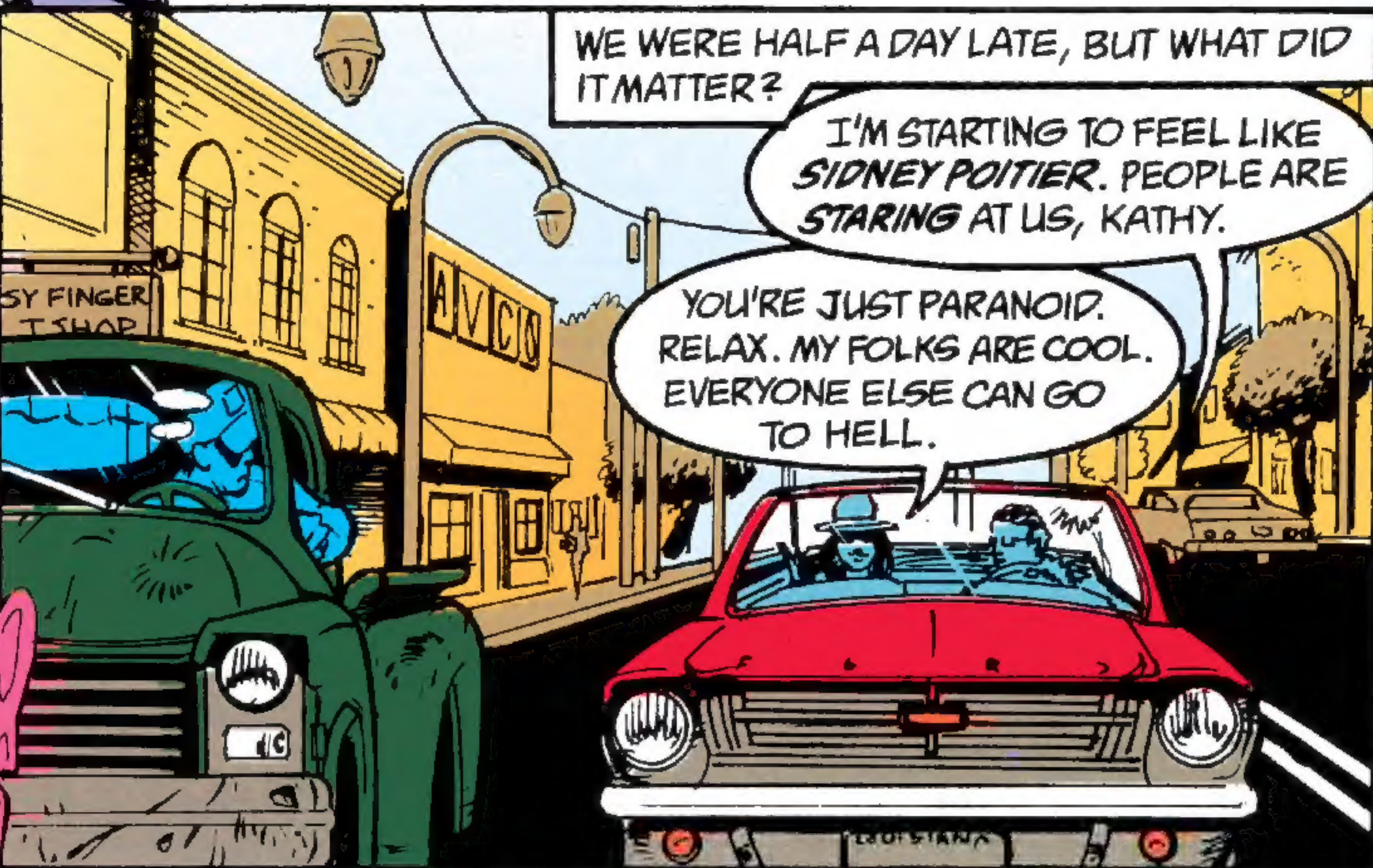
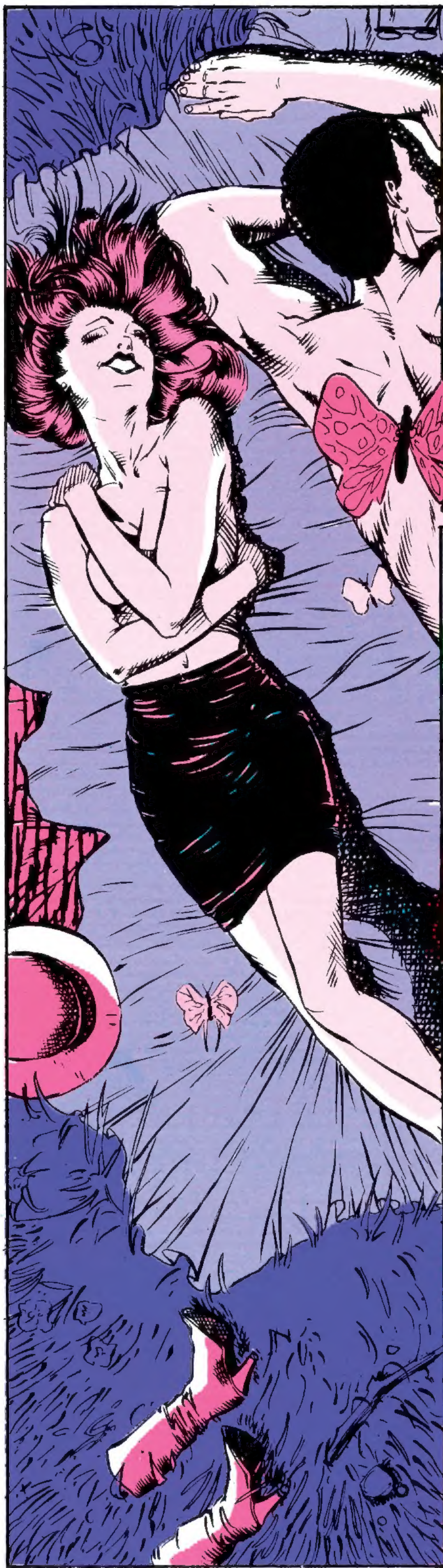
OF COURSE ROGER THOUGHT WE WERE CRAZY TOO, BUT I WANTED THEM TO MEET. THE THREE PEOPLE I LOVED MOST IN THE WORLD.

MY MOM AND DAD AND ROGER.



WE WERE HALF A DAY LATE, BUT WHAT DID IT MATTER?

WE'D STOPPED OFF IN A FIELD TO MAKE LOVE. WE'D FALLEN ASLEEP. WHAT DID IT MATTER?



WE WERE HALF A DAY LATE, BUT WHAT DID IT MATTER?

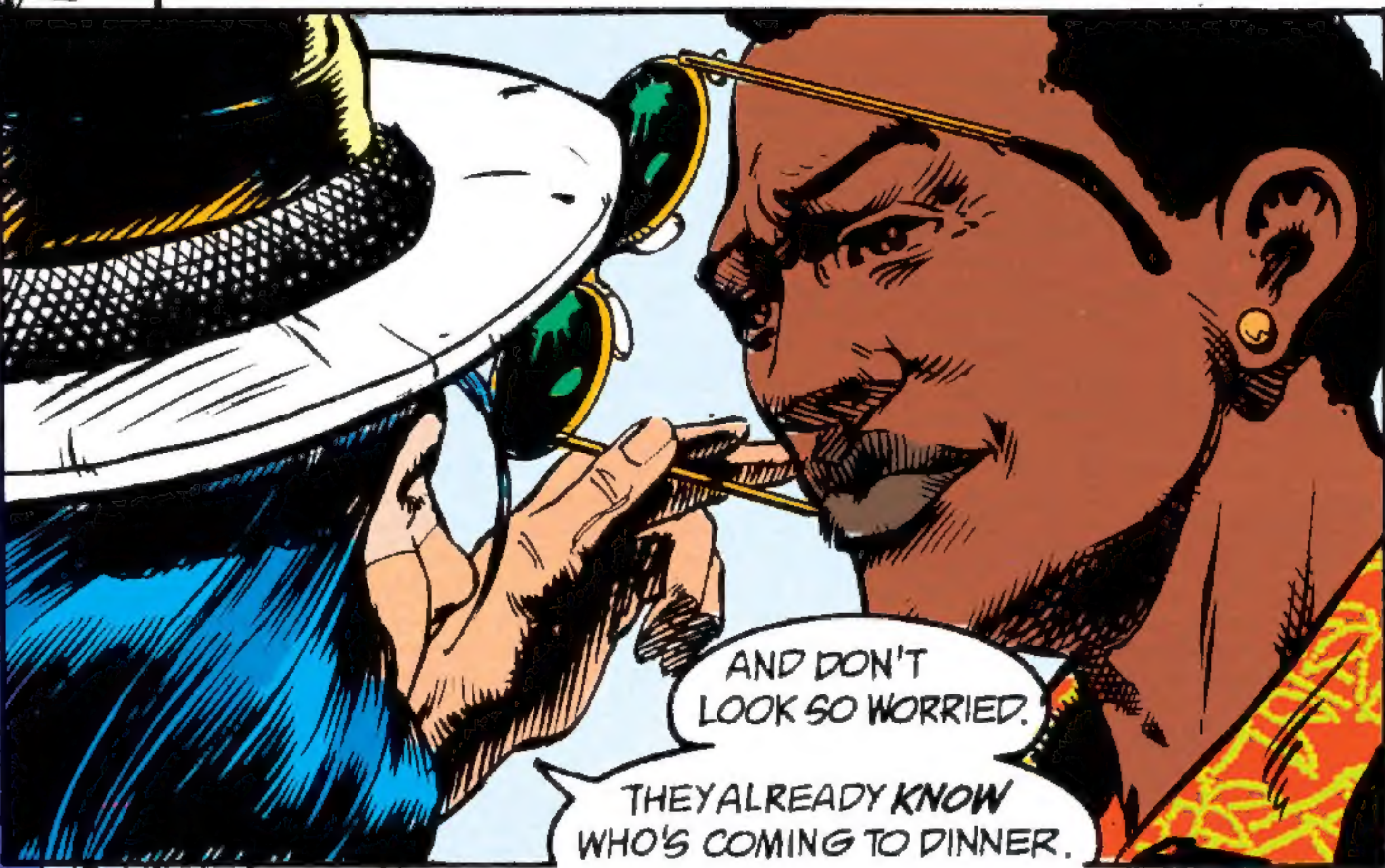
I'M STARTING TO FEEL LIKE *SIDNEY POITIER*. PEOPLE ARE *STARING* AT US, KATHY.

YOU'RE JUST PARANOID. RELAX. MY FOLKS ARE COOL. EVERYONE ELSE CAN GO TO HELL.



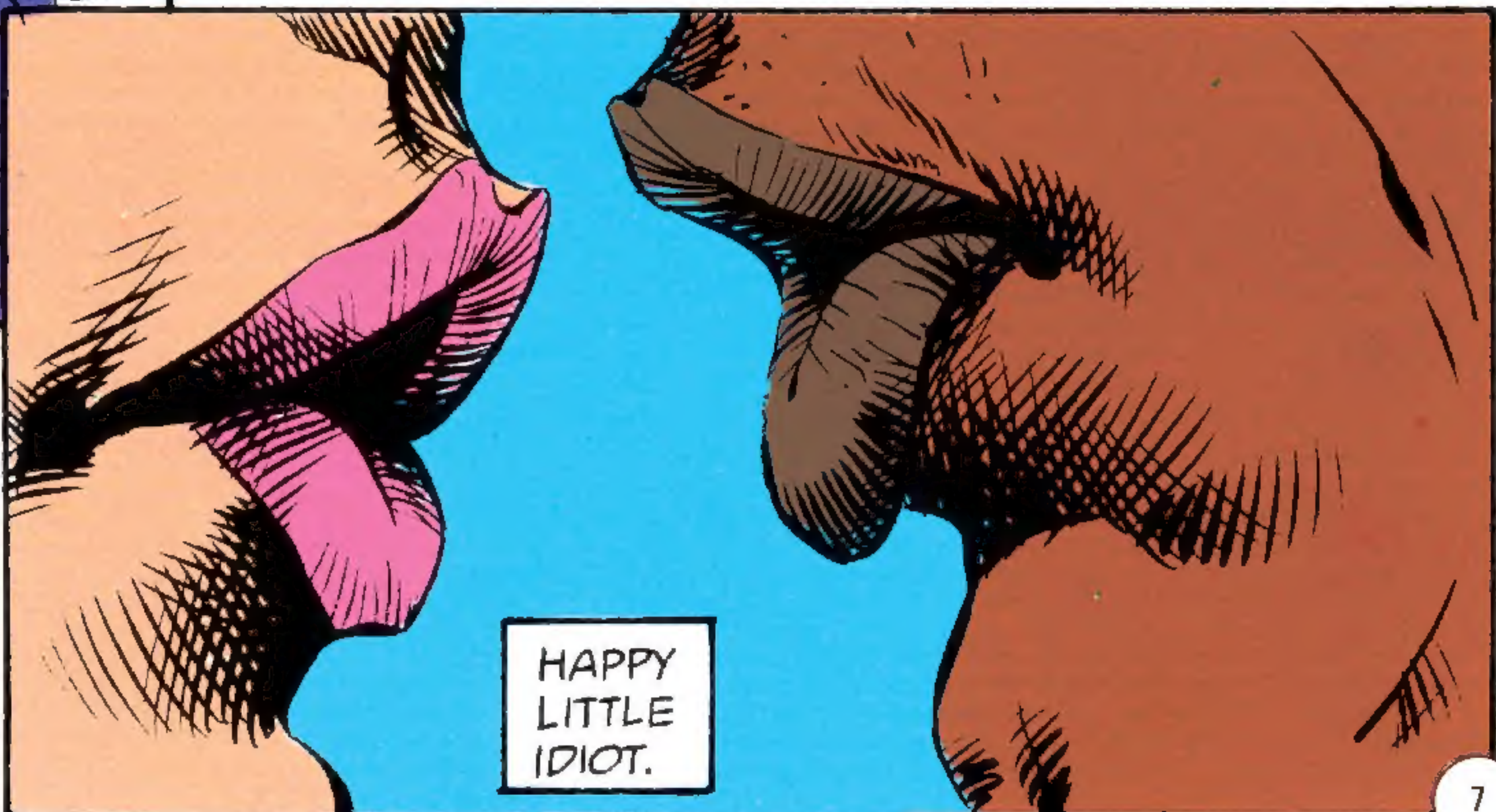
IT WAS A LITTLE *DREAM* THEY'D HAD. GET AWAY FROM *NEW YORK*. DAD CONCENTRATES ON HIS *WRITING*, MOM RETURNS TO THE *SOUTH*, WHERE SHE WAS BORN.

THIS IS THE ONE. GET THE BAGS AND I'LL SEE IF THEY'RE HOME.



AND DON'T LOOK SO WORRIED.

THEY ALREADY KNOW WHO'S COMING TO DINNER.



HAPPY LITTLE IDIOT.

AFTERWARDS I JUST LAY THERE, SMELLING THE RICH EARTH, WATCHING BIG WHITE BIRDS GLIDE ACROSS THE BLUE SKY, LISTENING TO THE INSECTS.

I WAS *HAPPY* IN THAT FIELD. I COULD HAVE STAYED THERE *FOREVER*. I LIKED LIFE IN THOSE DAYS. I THOUGHT LIFE WAS MY *BEST FRIEND*.

I WAS A HAPPY LITTLE IDIOT, REALLY.



I WALKED UP THE DRIVE. I OPENED THE DOOR. A CAR ENGINE BACKFIRED IN THE DISTANCE.

MOM,
DAD, IT'S
ME...



I HADN'T SEEN MOM AND DAD IN *TWO MONTHS*. I WAS BUSY WITH EXAMS, THEY WERE BUSY MOVING IN.

MOM,
DAD, IT'S
ME...



I USED TO WORRY THEM SO. AT *SIXTEEN* I RAN OFF WITH SOME BIKERS, BUT THEY WERE SUCH JERKS.

MOM,
DAD, IT'S
ME...



AT *SEVENTEEN* I WAS CAUGHT SMOKING DOPE WITH A FOOTBALL PLAYER AND I THOUGHT MY PARENTS WERE JUST *STUPID*.

MOM,
DAD, IT'S
ME...



BY THE TIME I WAS *NINETEEN* I THOUGHT MY PARENTS HAD REALLY IMPROVED AND I STARTED TO LIKE THEM AGAIN.

MOM,
DAD, IT'S
ME...

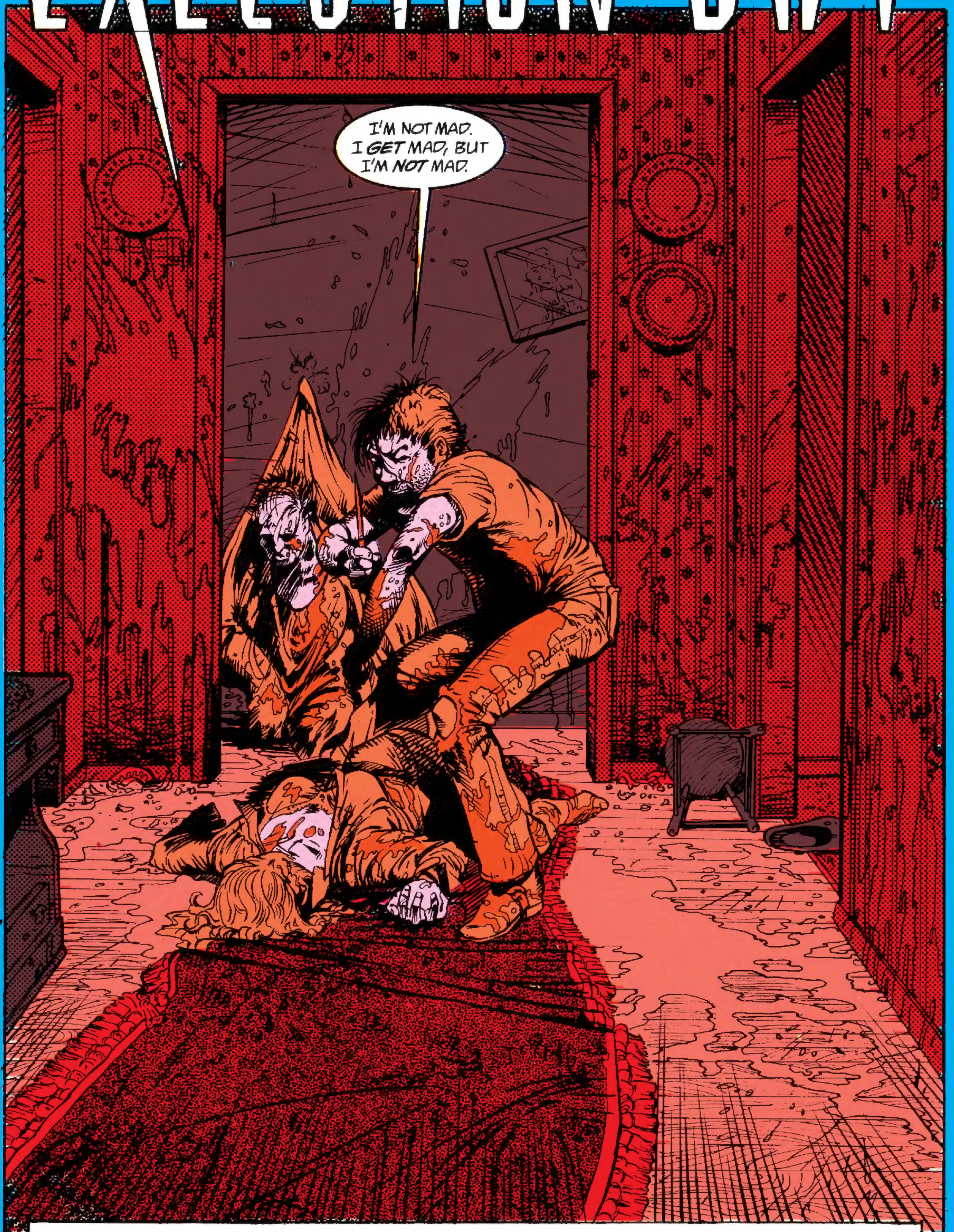


BY THE TIME I WAS *TWENTY* I WAS STANDING IN THE DOOR OF THEIR NEW HOUSE AND I *SMELT* IT BEFORE I SAW IT. I *SMELT* IT.

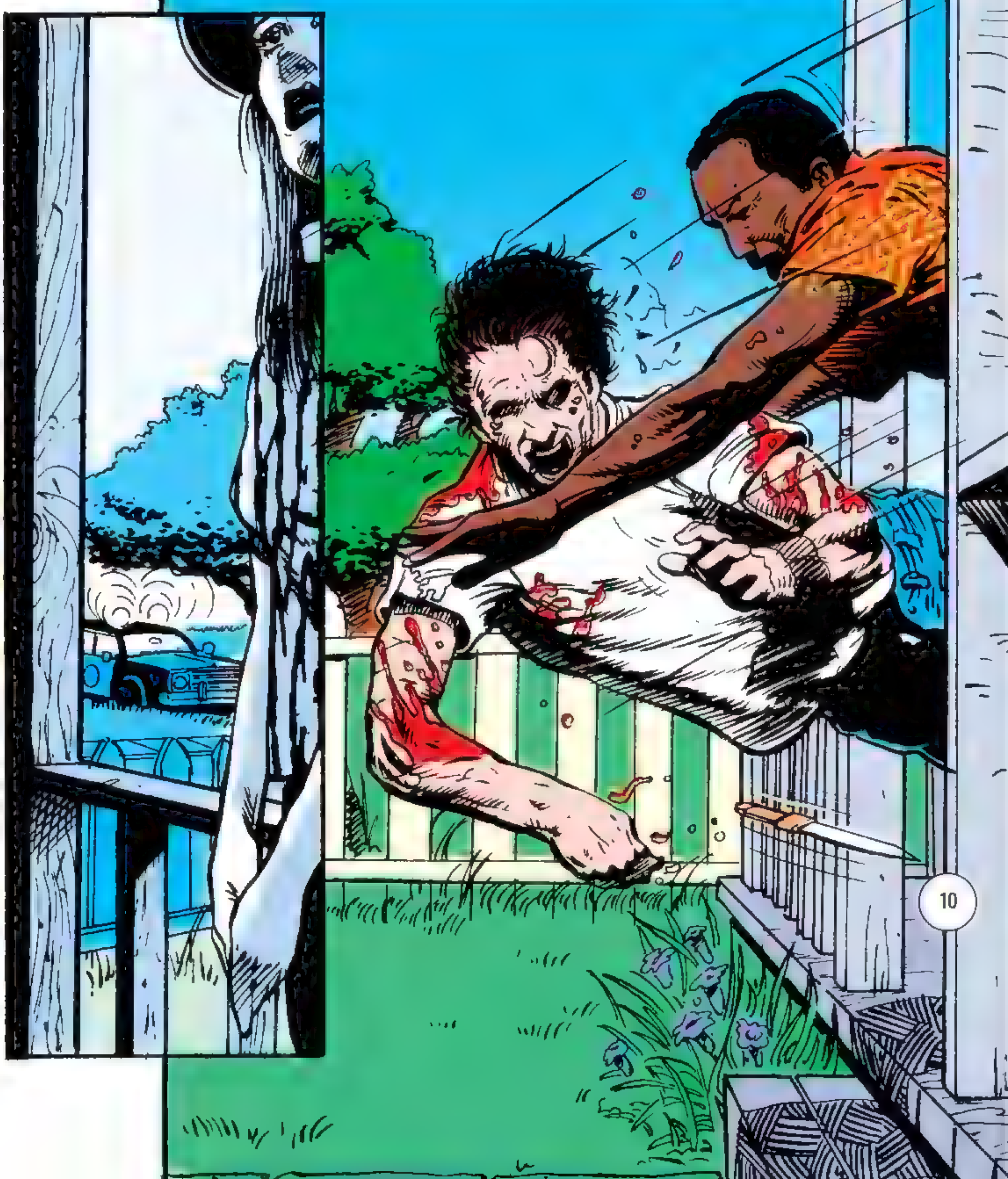
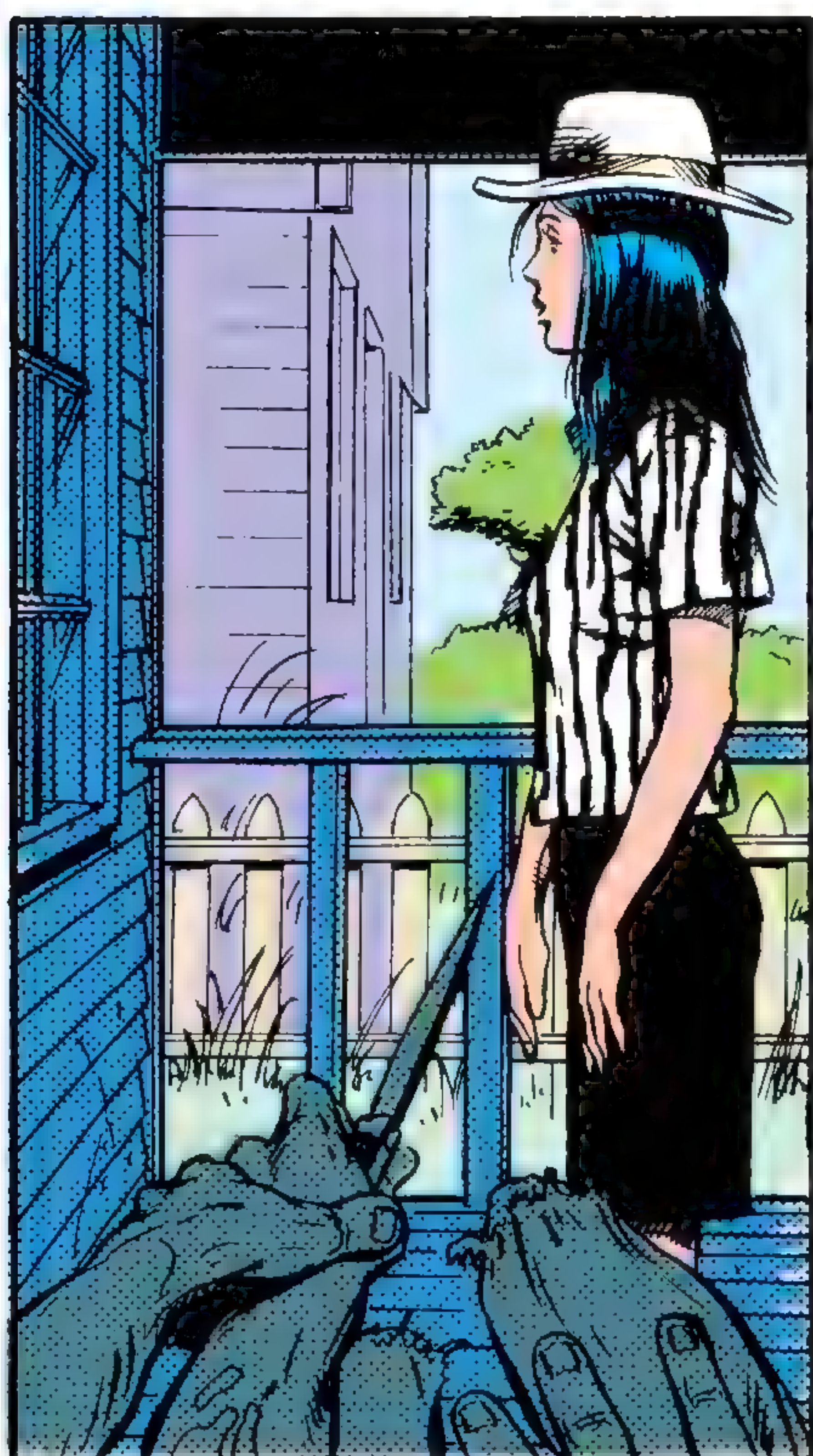
THE BLOOD.

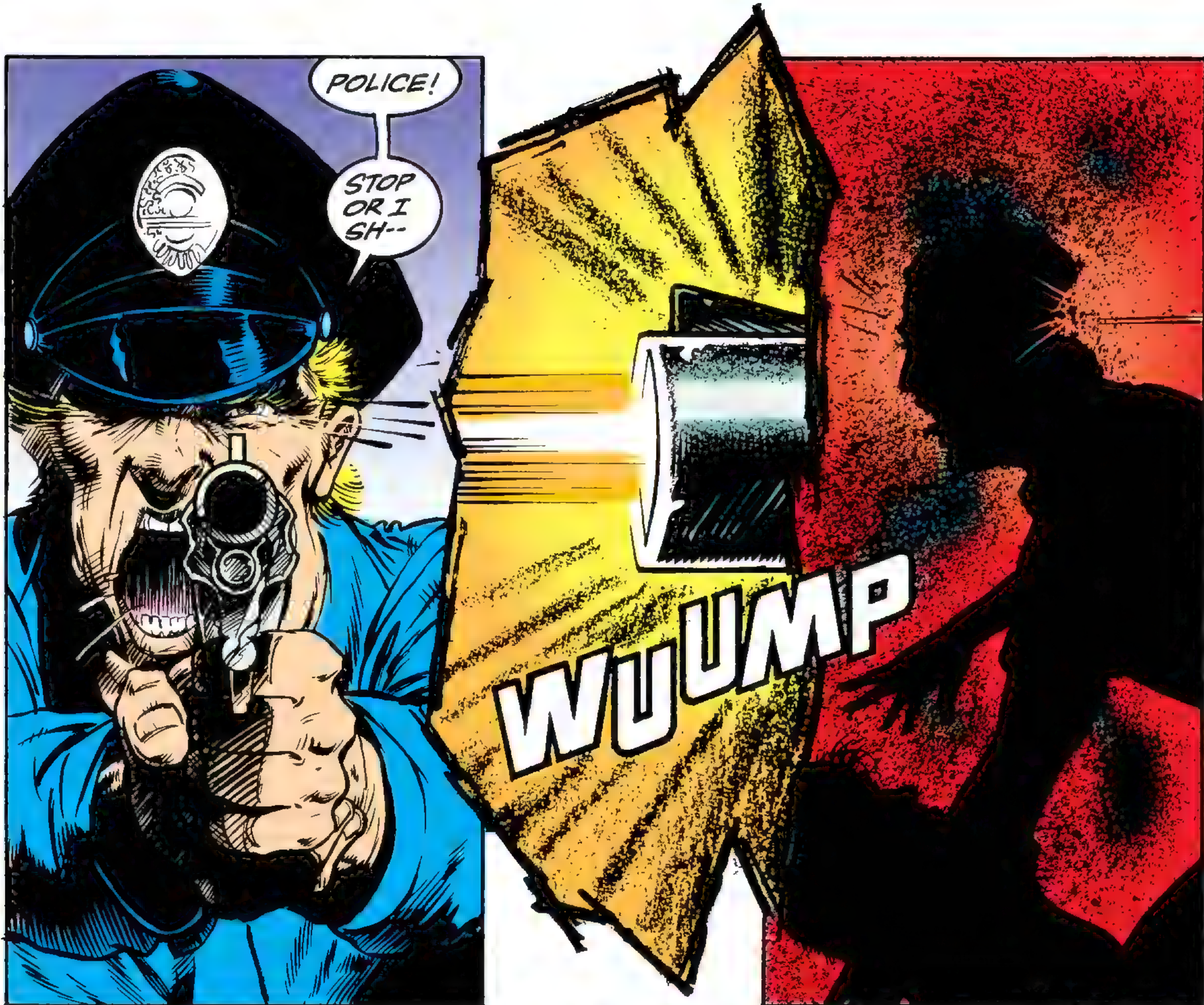
MOM,
DAD, IT'S
ME...

EXECUTION DAY



PETER MILLIGAN, WRITER * CHRIS BACHALO, PENCILLER * MARK PENNINGTON, INKER.
TODD KLEIN, LETTERER * DANIEL VOZZO, COLORIST * TOM PEYER, ASSISTANT EDITOR
KAREN BERGER, EDITOR * SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN CREATED BY STEVE DITKO







IT'S ALL A BLUR AFTER THAT. I REMEMBER I **HOWLED** AND I **HOWLED** AND I **HOWLED**. I **HOWLED** FOR MOM AND DAD AND ROGER.

I **SCRATCHED** THE WALLS, **SCRATCHED** MYSELF AND MY MIND WAS IN A MILLION PIECES AND I COULDN'T GATHER ALL THE PIECES AT ONCE.



EVERY NIGHT HE CAME TO ME. CAME TO MY BED. I'D TAKE THE KNIFE FROM HIM. I'D RAM IT INTO HIS **HEART**, HIS **NECK**, HIS **FACE**.

BUT HE **NEVER DIED**. HE KEPT COMING **BACK AND BACK** AND I **KNEW**, EVERY NIGHT.

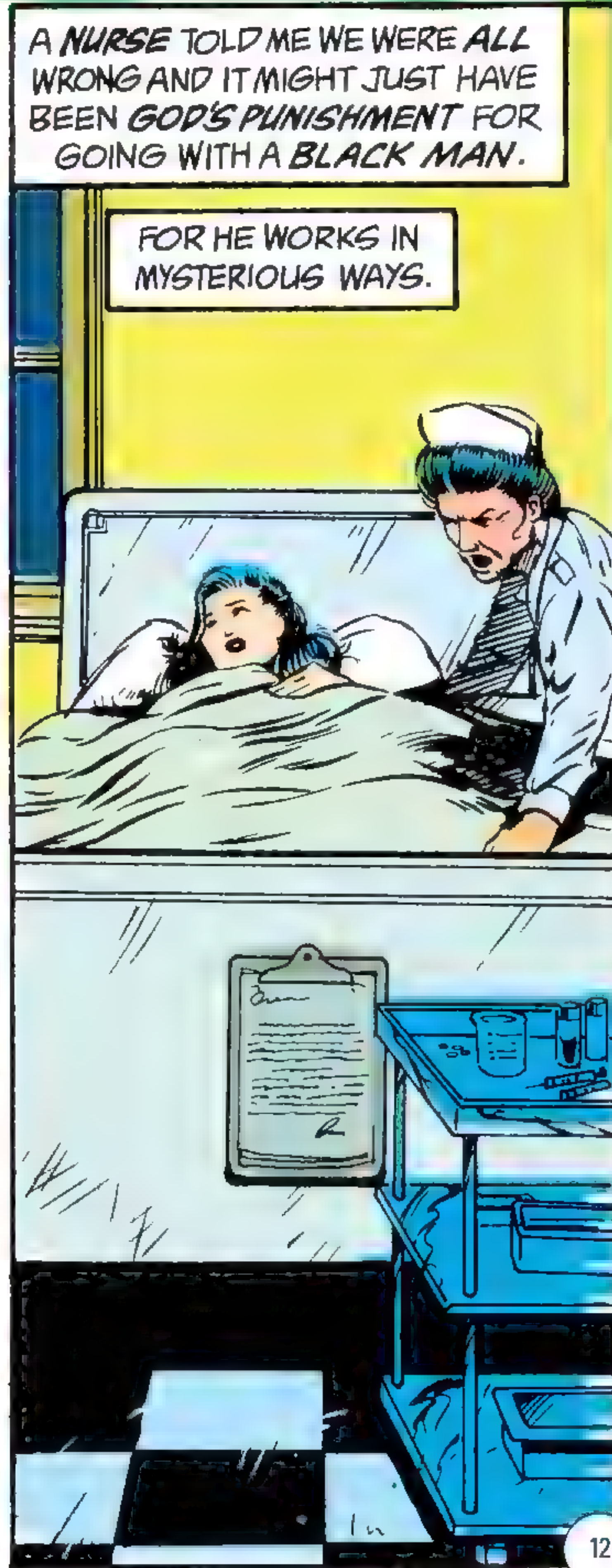


I **KNEW** IT WAS **MY FAULT**. **KNEW** I WAS TO **BLAME**. I'D KILLED ROGER BY TAKING HIM TO THE SOUTH. I'D LET MY PARENTS BE KILLED BECAUSE I SHOWED UP LATE.

WHILE **THEY** WERE BEING BUTCHERED I WAS **SCREWING** IN A FIELD.



I WONDERED IF SOMETHING DEEP DOWN IN ME **WANTED** THEM TO DIE. THIS INTERESTED THE DOCTORS, SEEMED TO FIT IN WITH THEIR THEORIES, TO PLEASE THEM. I **WANTED** TO PLEASE THEM.



A **NURSE** TOLD ME WE WERE ALL WRONG AND IT MIGHT JUST HAVE BEEN **GOD'S PUNISHMENT** FOR GOING WITH A **BLACK MAN**.

FOR HE WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS.

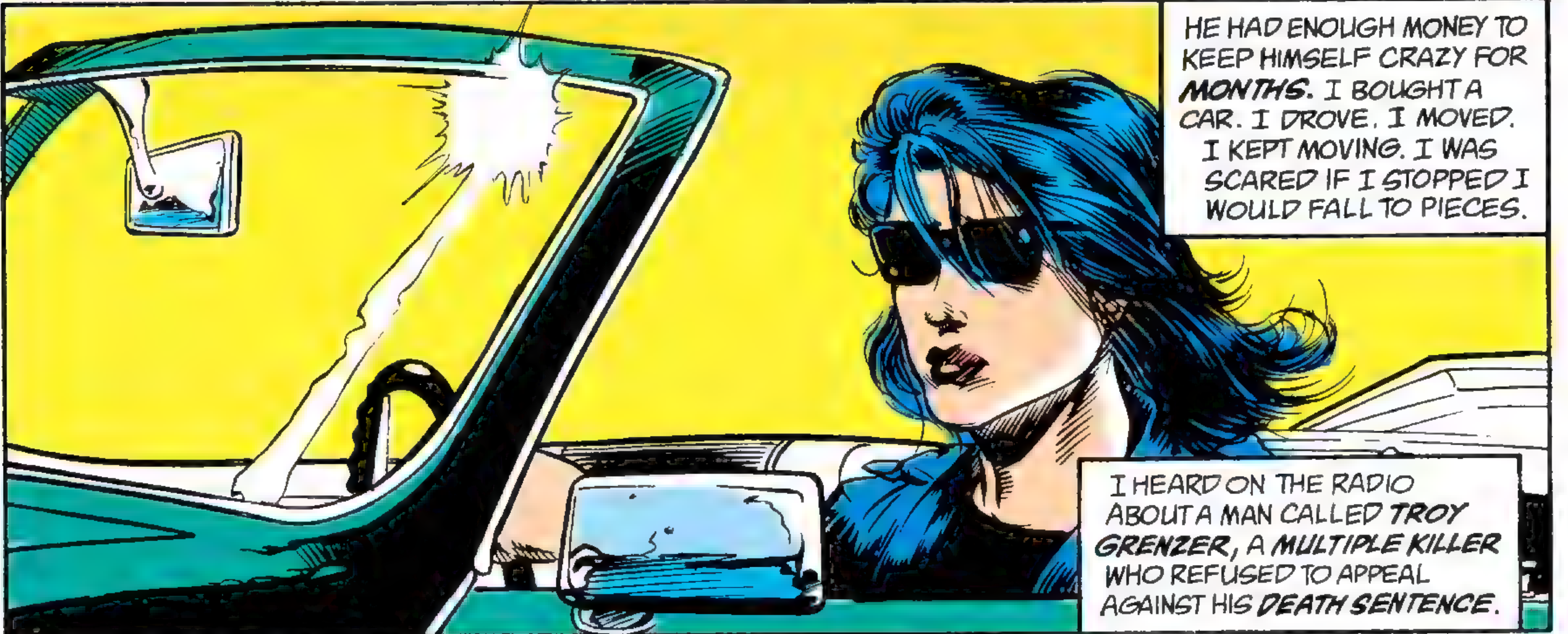
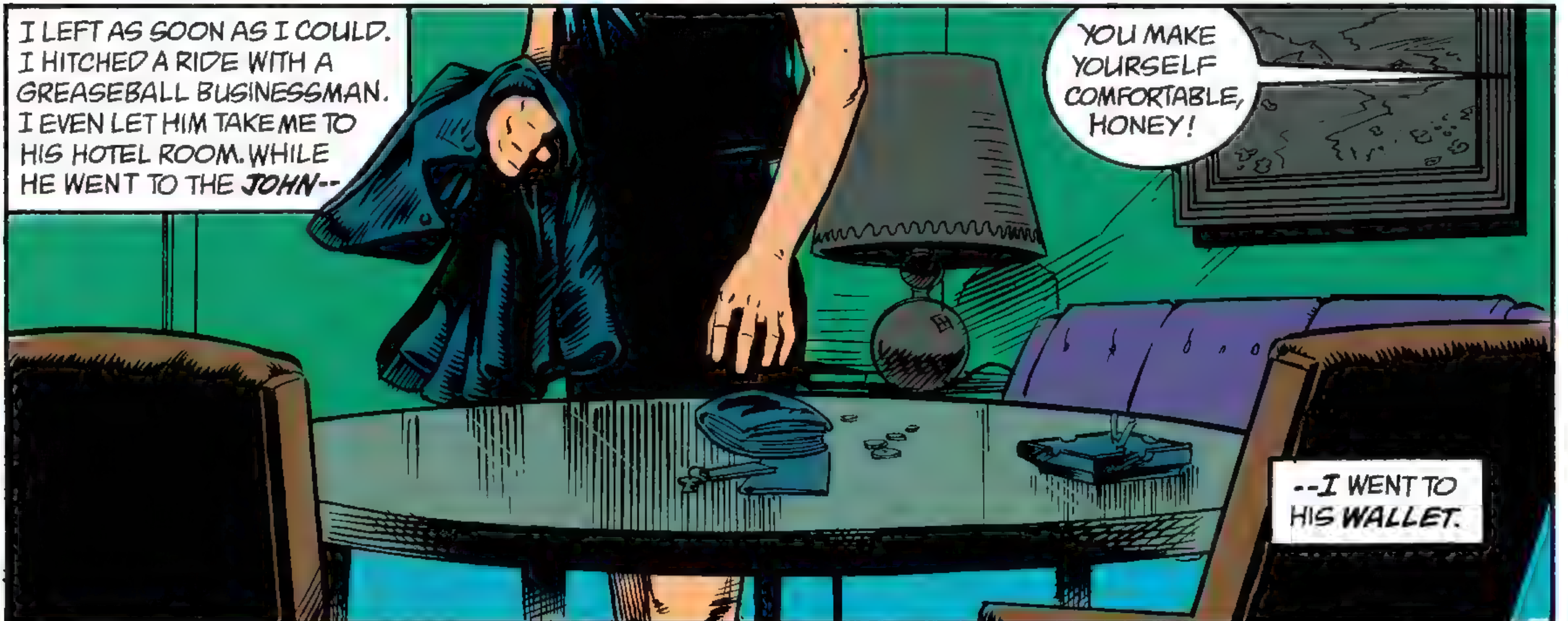
THEN MOM AND DAD'S **MONEY** RAN OUT SO IT SEEMED I WAS **TOO POOR** TO BE CRAZY. I WAS PUT ON A **GREYHOUND** TO **SALT LAKE CITY**.



I LEFT AS SOON AS I COULD. I HITCHED A RIDE WITH A **GREASEBALL** BUSINESSMAN. I EVEN LET HIM TAKE ME TO HIS HOTEL ROOM. WHILE HE WENT TO THE **JOHN--**

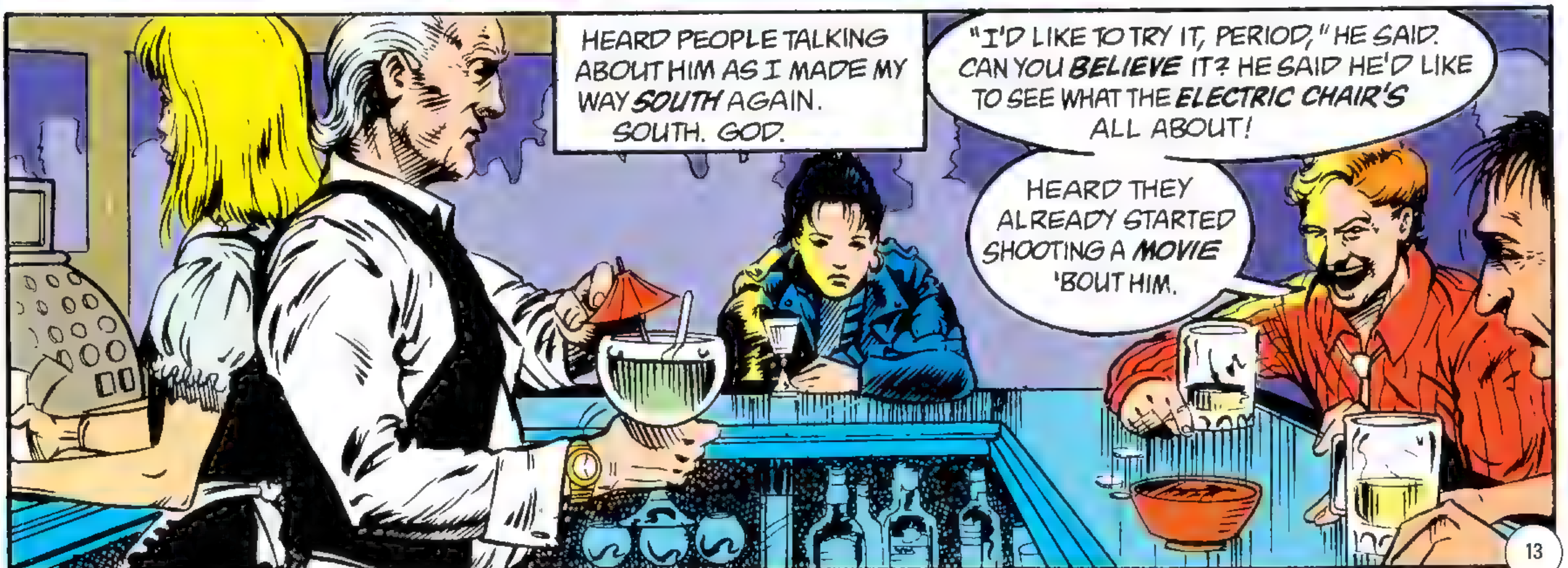
YOU MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE, HONEY!

--I WENT TO HIS WALLET.



HE HAD ENOUGH MONEY TO KEEP HIMSELF CRAZY FOR **MONTHS**. I BOUGHT A CAR. I DROVE. I MOVED. I KEPT MOVING. I WAS SCARED IF I STOPPED I WOULD FALL TO PIECES.

I HEARD ON THE RADIO ABOUT A MAN CALLED **TROY GRENZER**, A **MULTIPLE KILLER** WHO REFUSED TO APPEAL AGAINST HIS **DEATH SENTENCE**.

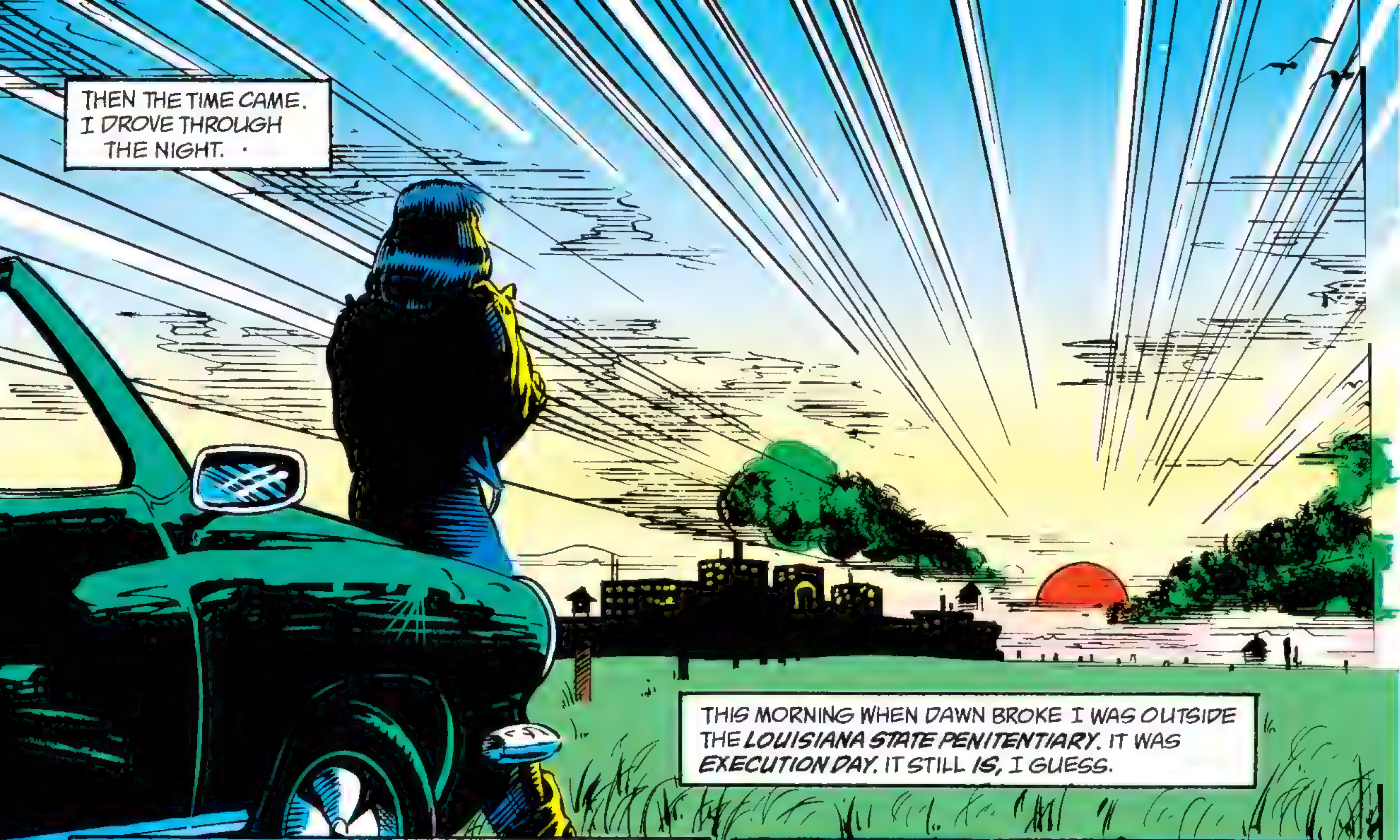


HEARD PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT HIM AS I MADE MY WAY **SOUTH** AGAIN. **SOUTH. GOD.**

"I'D LIKE TO TRY IT, PERIOD," HE SAID. CAN YOU **BELIEVE** IT? HE SAID HE'D LIKE TO SEE WHAT THE **ELECTRIC CHAIR'S** ALL ABOUT!

HEARD THEY ALREADY STARTED SHOOTING A **MOVIE** 'BOUT HIM.

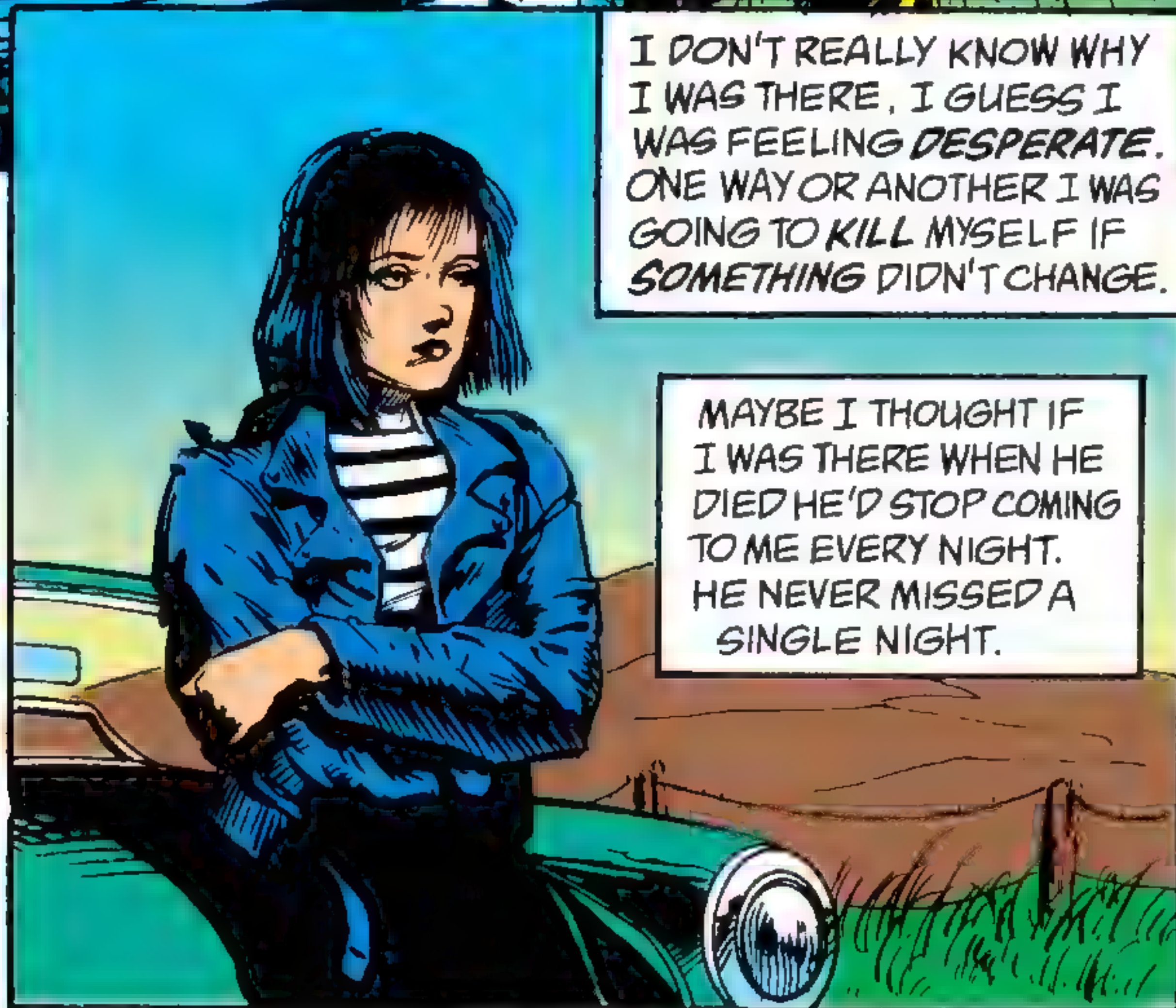
THEN THE TIME CAME.
I DROVE THROUGH
THE NIGHT.



THIS MORNING WHEN DAWN BROKE I WAS OUTSIDE
THE LOUISIANA STATE PENITENTIARY. IT WAS
EXECUTION DAY. IT STILL IS, I GUESS.

I DON'T REALLY KNOW WHY
I WAS THERE, I GUESS I
WAS FEELING *DESPERATE*.
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER I WAS
GOING TO KILL MYSELF IF
SOMETHING DIDN'T CHANGE.

MAYBE I THOUGHT IF
I WAS THERE WHEN HE
DIED HE'D STOP COMING
TO ME EVERY NIGHT.
HE NEVER MISSED A
SINGLE NIGHT.



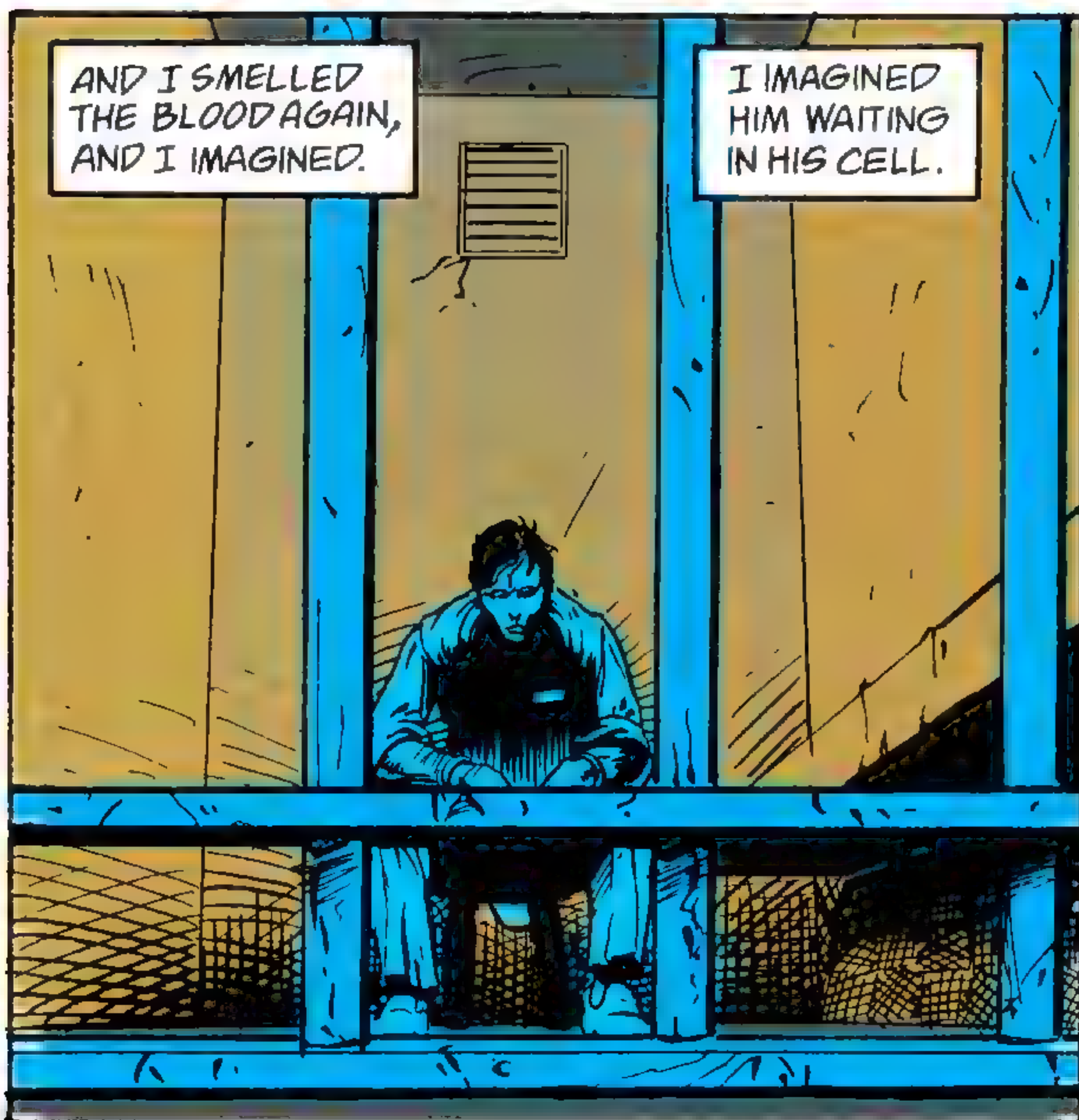
SO I WAITED.
AND I THOUGHT
ABOUT A WARM DAY
IN LOUISIANA
THREE YEARS AGO.

I THOUGHT ABOUT KISSING
ROGER, OPENING THE DOOR, SAYING,
"MOM, DAD, IT'S ME ...".



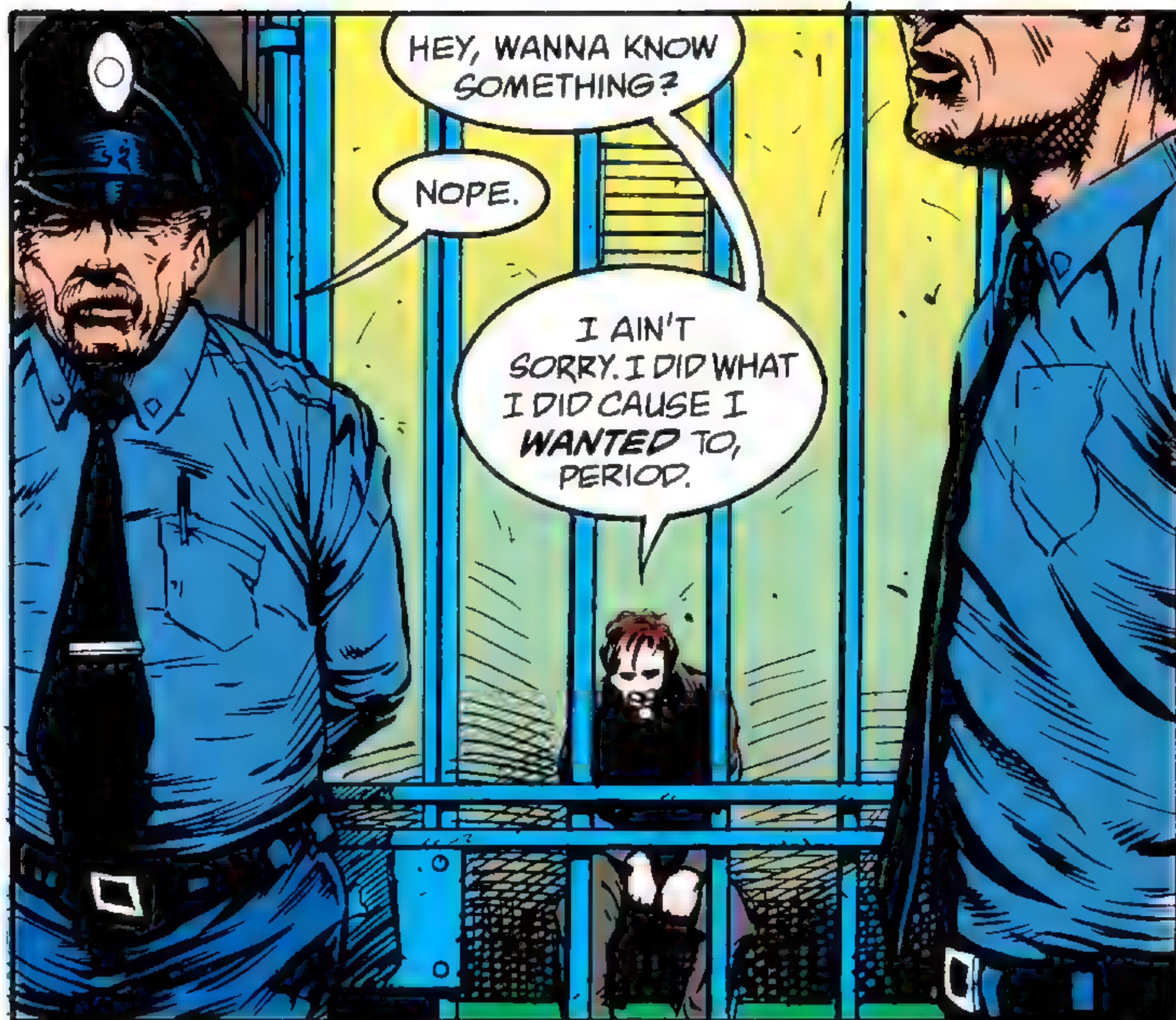
AND I SMELLED
THE BLOOD AGAIN,
AND I IMAGINED.

I IMAGINED
HIM WAITING
IN HIS CELL.



AND I TRIED TO IMAGINE WHAT,
IF ANYTHING, HE WAS *FEELING*.





HEY, WANNA KNOW SOMETHING?

NOPE.

I AIN'T SORRY. I DID WHAT I DID CAUSE I **WANTED TO**, PERIOD.



MUST BE CLOSE TO **THIRTY-FIVE** BODIES ACROSS TEXAS AND LOUISIANA I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR. **WOMEN** MOSTLY. **BLACK AND WHITE**.

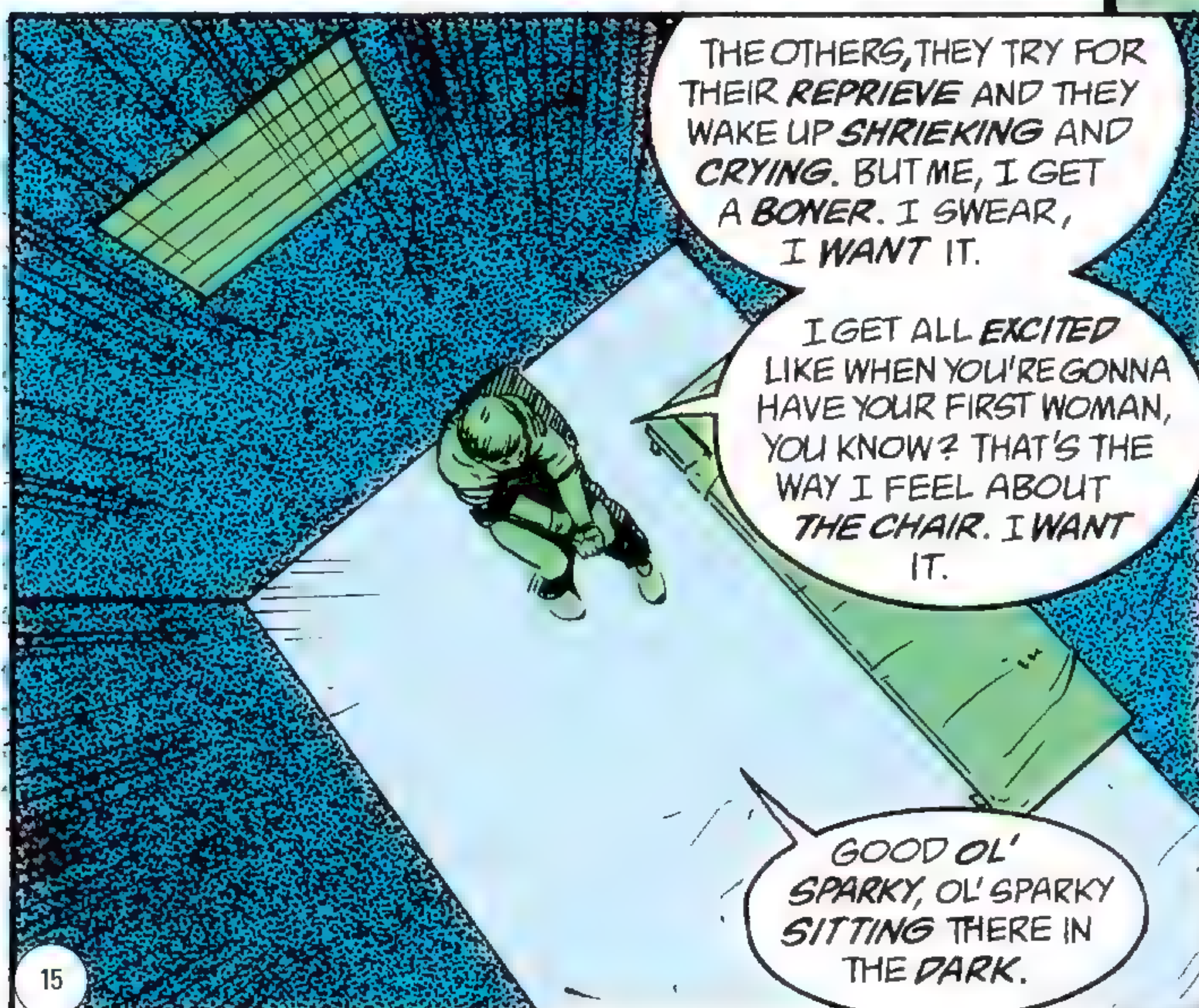
MAYBE IF I'D STUCK WITH **BLACKS** THEY'D HAVE JUST GIVEN ME **LIFE**, BUT THAT AIN'T MY WAY, NO SIR.



THE PAPERS AND TEE VEE JUST **LOVE** ME. CAN'T GET **ENOUGH** OF ME. LISTEN, IF THEY LET ME OUT TODAY I'D BE **RICH** TOMORROW.

I COULD HAVE MY OWN TALK SHOW, BE IN MOVIES. **EVERYONE'D** WANT ME. I'M A STAR. I'M **CHARLES MANSON** AND **JAMES DEAN** ROLLED INTO ONE.

I'M AN **AMERICAN HERO**.



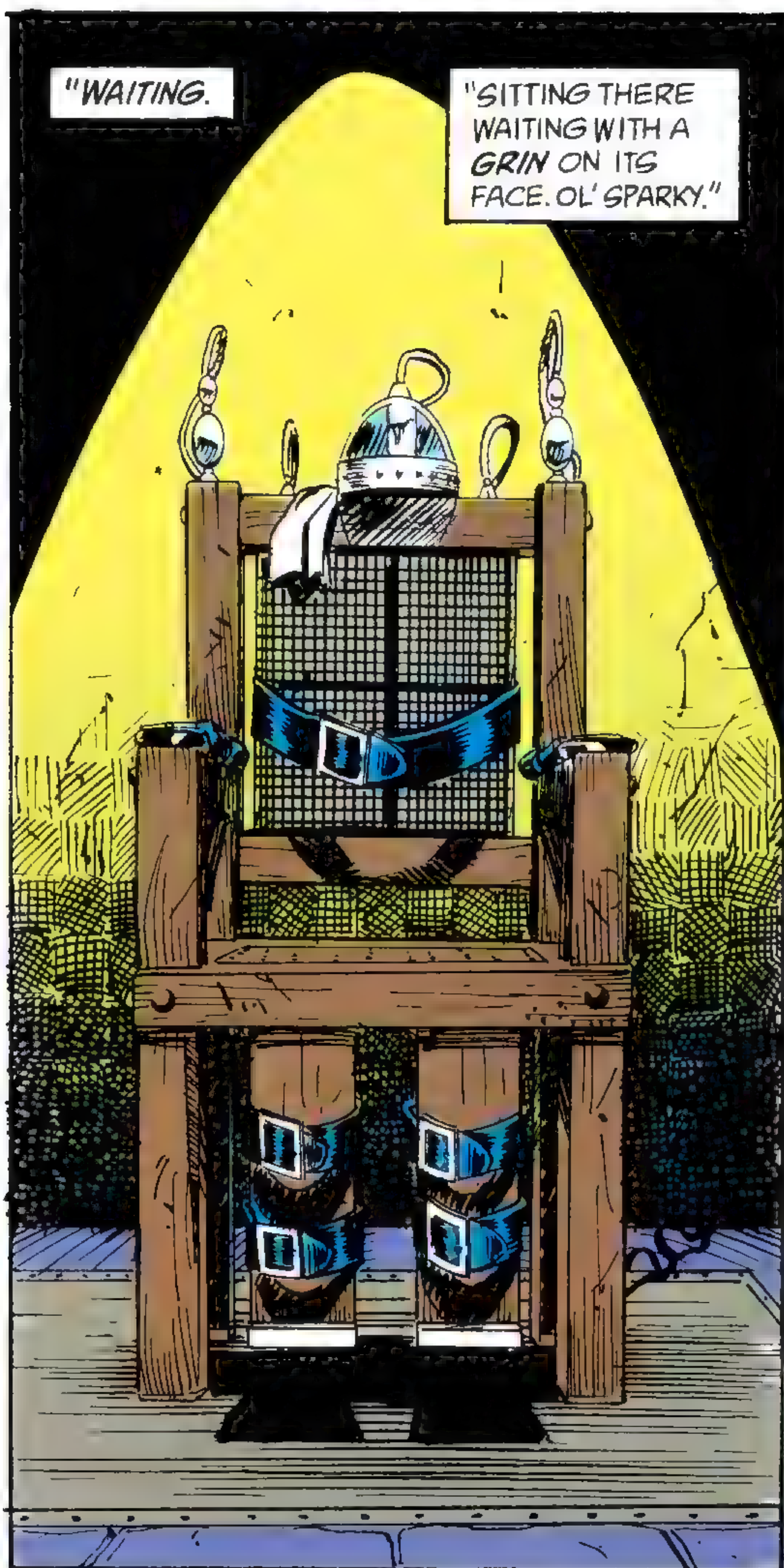
THE OTHERS, THEY TRY FOR THEIR **REPRIEVE** AND THEY WAKE UP **SHRIEKING** AND **CRYING**. BUT ME, I GET A **BOYER**. I SWEAR, I **WANT IT**.

I GET ALL **EXCITED** LIKE WHEN YOU'RE GONNA HAVE YOUR FIRST WOMAN, YOU KNOW? THAT'S THE WAY I FEEL ABOUT **THE CHAIR**. I **WANT IT**.

GOOD OL' **SPARKY**, OL' **SPARKY** SITTING THERE IN THE **DARK**.



SMILING TO HIMSELF.



"WAITING.

"SITTING THERE WAITING WITH A GRIN ON ITS FACE. OL' SPARKY."



I'VE SEEN IT, SQUATTING THERE LIKE A BIG BLACK INSECT IN THE DARK. THE HOOD LEANING BACK, LIKE IT WAS LAUGHING.

SURE YOU HAVE, TROY.

WE GOTTA SHAVE YOUR HEAD AND LEG NOW, YOU KNOW THAT, DON'T YOU?



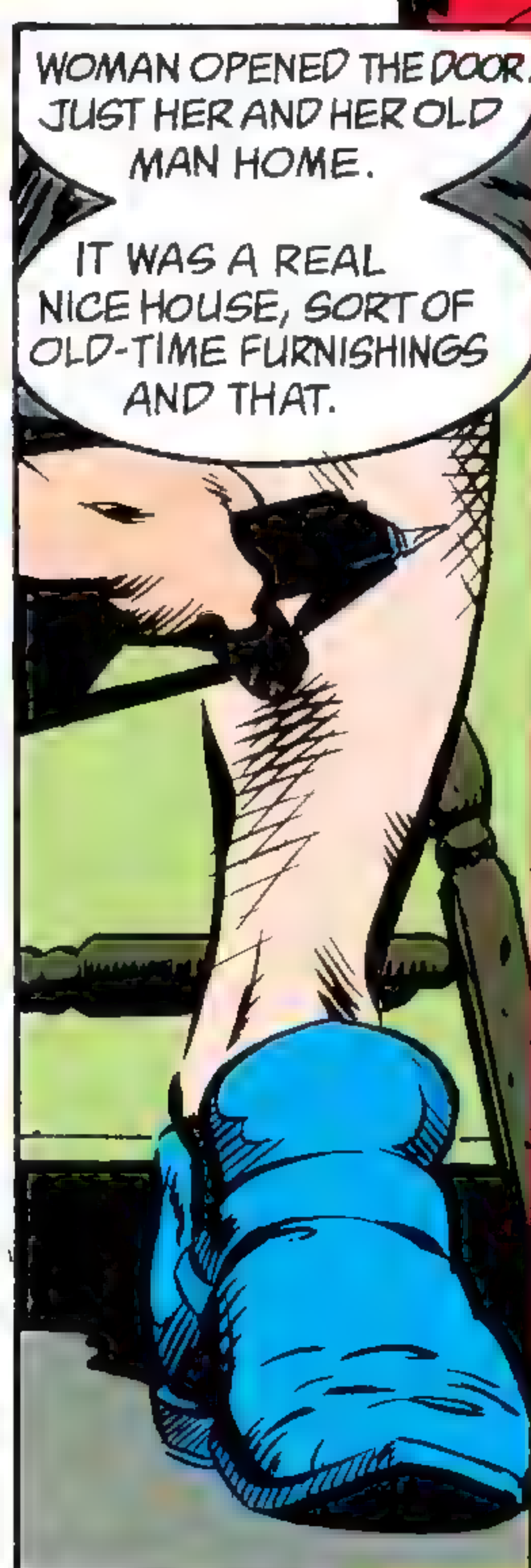
SOME MEN GET OFF THINKING ABOUT THE *WOMEN* THEY'VE HAD, BUT ME, I THINK ABOUT THOSE *TIMES*. THOSE *GOOD* TIMES, WHEN I WAS *BUZZING*.

WHEN I FELT THE *ELECTRICITY*.



SHUT YOUR MOUTH, GRENZER.

NO, LISTEN, THE LAST TIME I DID IT WAS AT THIS HOUSE. PRETENDED TO BE DELIVERING *GROCERIES*.



WOMAN OPENED THE DOOR. JUST HER AND HER OLD MAN HOME.

IT WAS A REAL NICE HOUSE, SORT OF OLD-TIME FURNISHINGS AND THAT.

"I TOOK OUT THE MAN FIRST CAUSE HE WAS TROUBLE. STUCK HIM IN THE NECK. THEN I STARTED ON THE *WOMAN*.

"SHE HAD A LITTLE BIRTHMARK BEHIND HER EAR. REAL CUTE."



I WANNA KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE, WHEN THE **CURRENT** HITS YOU. **DONE** EVERYTHING ELSE. GONE AS FAR AS YOU CAN AND STILL COME BACK.

HEARD OF A GUY YEARS BACK WHO **DIDN'T DIE**. THEY HOOKED HIM UP AND PULLED THE SWITCH BUT THE MOTHER **DIDN'T DIE!**

CARRIED HIM BACK TO HIS CELL AND HE **DESCRIBED IT!** HE WENT **THAT FAR** AND CAME BACK AND **TALKED!**



SAID HE FELT A **BURNING** IN HIS HEAD AND HAD A TASTE LIKE **COLD PEANUT BUTTER** IN HIS MOUTH. **COLD PEANUT BUTTER!**

JUST GOTTA RUB THIS IN, TROY. **ELECTRICAL CONDUCTING GEL...**

WHA? OH, YEAH. **DON'T MIND ME.**



HE JUMPED AGAINST THE STRAPS WHEN THE **JUICE** HIT HIM. SAW THESE **COLORS** SPECKLES OR SOME SHIT...

NEVER STOPS. TALKS ALL TIME. EVEN WHEN HE'S **SLEEPING**. THERE'S A **MEDICAL** WORD FOR IT.



YEAH. **SHITBRAIN.**

THEY **BURNED** HIM AGAIN A YEAR LATER. THIS TIME HE **DIDN'T** COME BACK.

JEEZ, THE **ELECTRIC CHAIR** AND **PEANUT BUTTER**. AMERICAN AS **APPLE PIE**, EH?



I HEARD HOW THE **SKIN BURNS** AND CHANGES COLOR, HOW YOU **SICK BLOOD** AND YOUR **EYEBALLS MELT**. HEARD ALL THAT SHIT. **DON'T** SCARE ME.

I'M READY. I'M WAITING.

OKAY, TROY. **DON'T** HAVE TO WAIT NO LONGER.

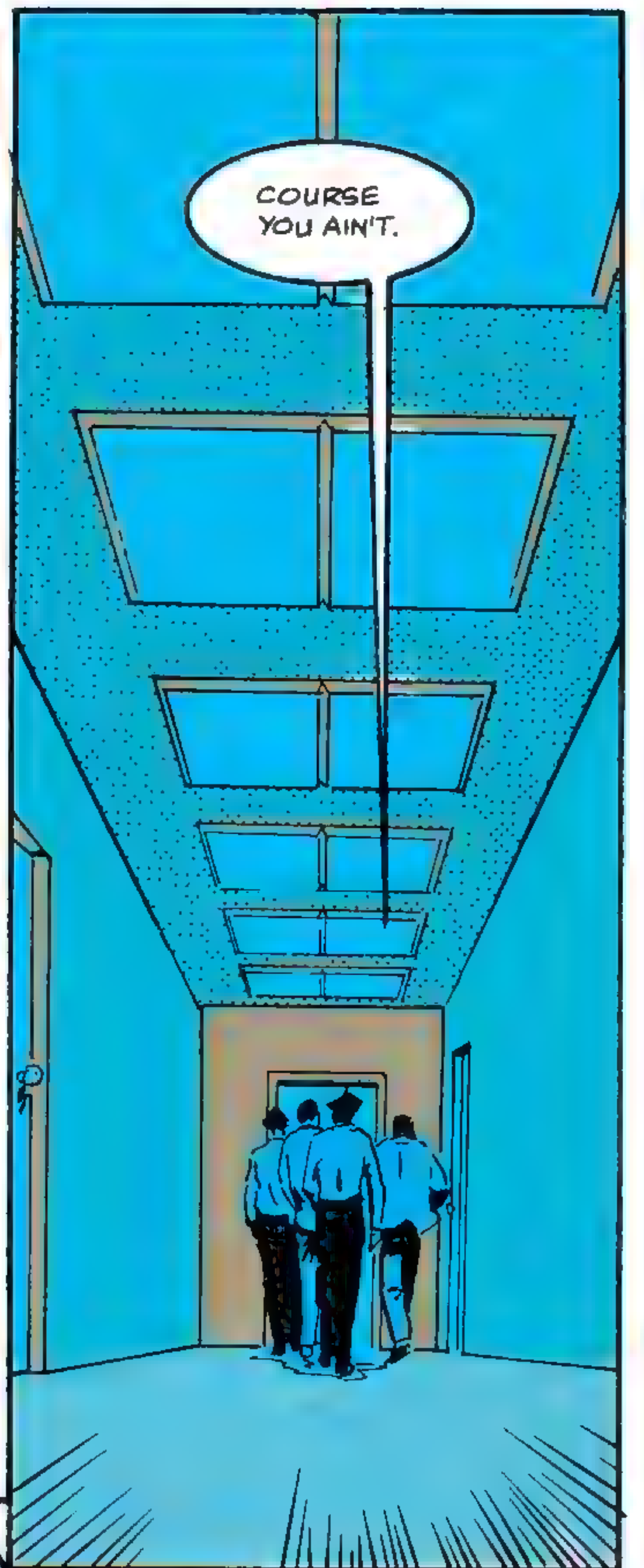
LET'S WALK.



I AIN'T SCARED
OR NOTHING.



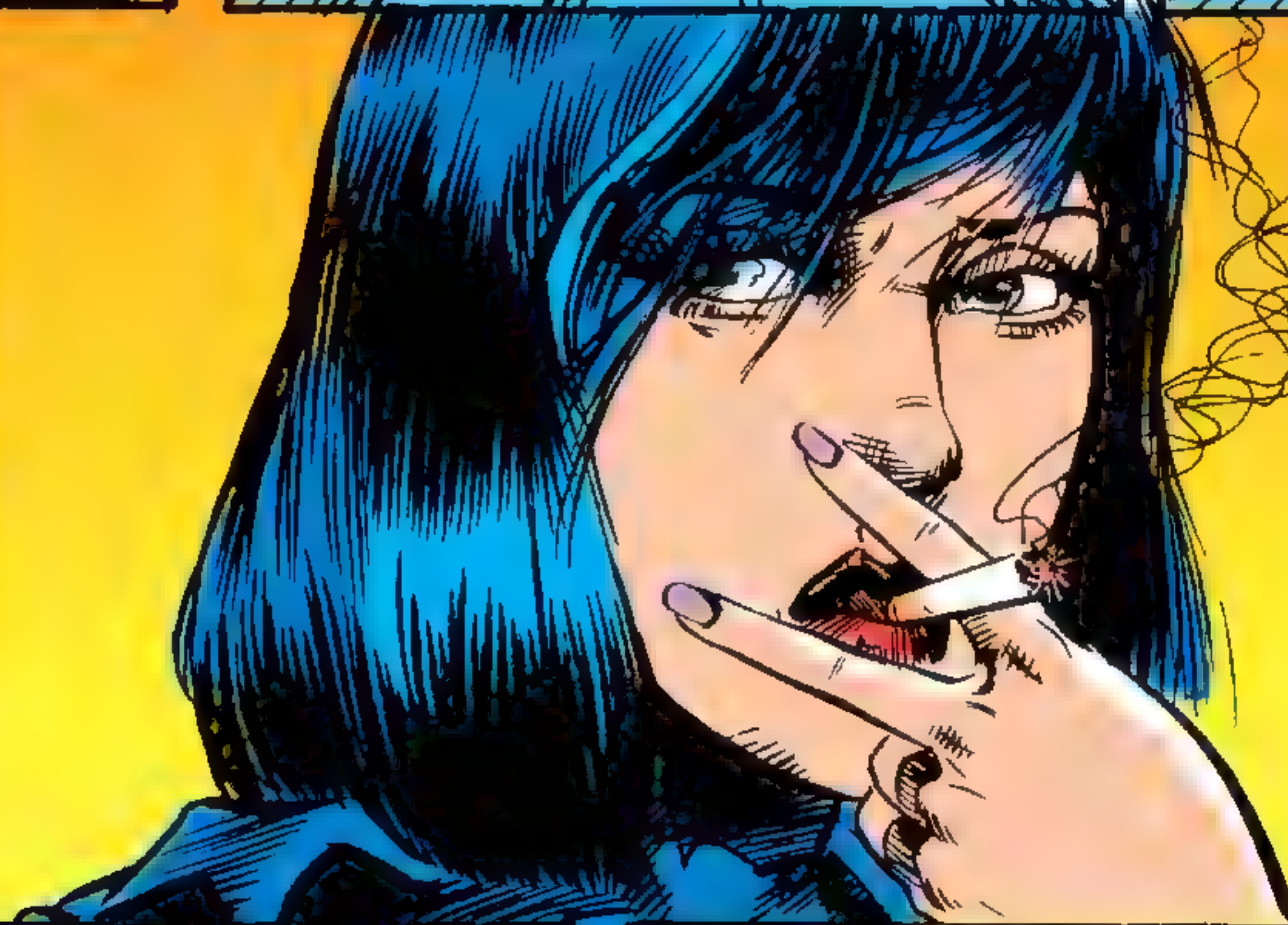
COURSE
YOU AIN'T,
TROY.



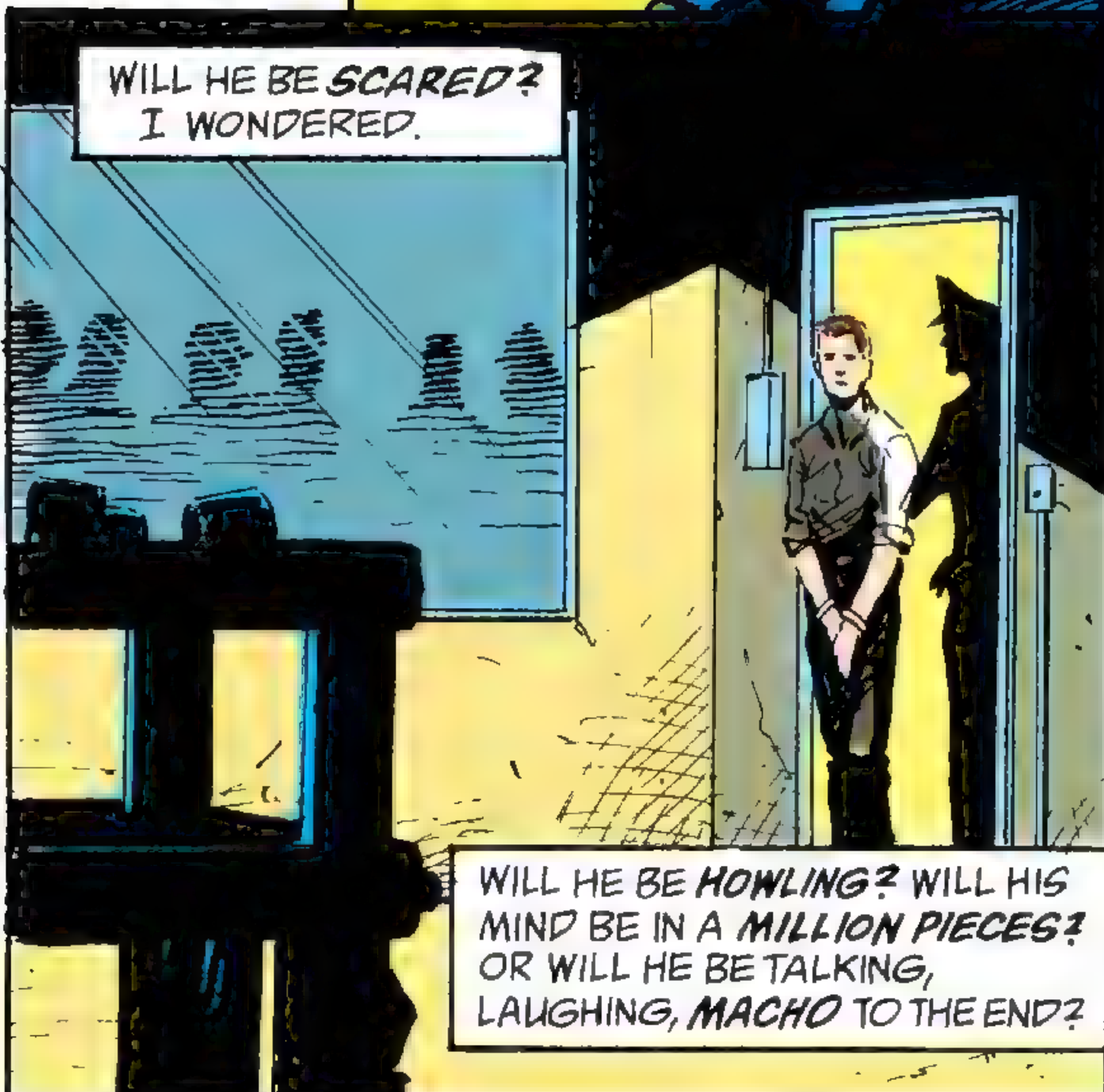
COURSE
YOU AIN'T.

I IMAGINED IT ALL. THE
ELECTRICIAN WOULD SOON
BE PLACING **SPONGES**
SOAKED IN **AMMONIUM**
CHLORIDE SOLUTION ON
HIS HEAD.

ELECTRODES WOULD BE
ATTACHED TO HIS HEAD AND
RIGHT LEG. I'D READ UP
ABOUT ELECTROCUTIONS...



TWELVE OFFICIAL
WITNESSES WOULD
HAVE GATHERED TO
WITNESS HIS
EXECUTION.



WILL HE BE **SCARED**?
I WONDERED.

WILL HE BE **HOWLING**? WILL HIS
MIND BE IN A **MILLION PIECES**?
OR WILL HE BE TALKING,
LAUGHING, **MACHO** TO THE END?

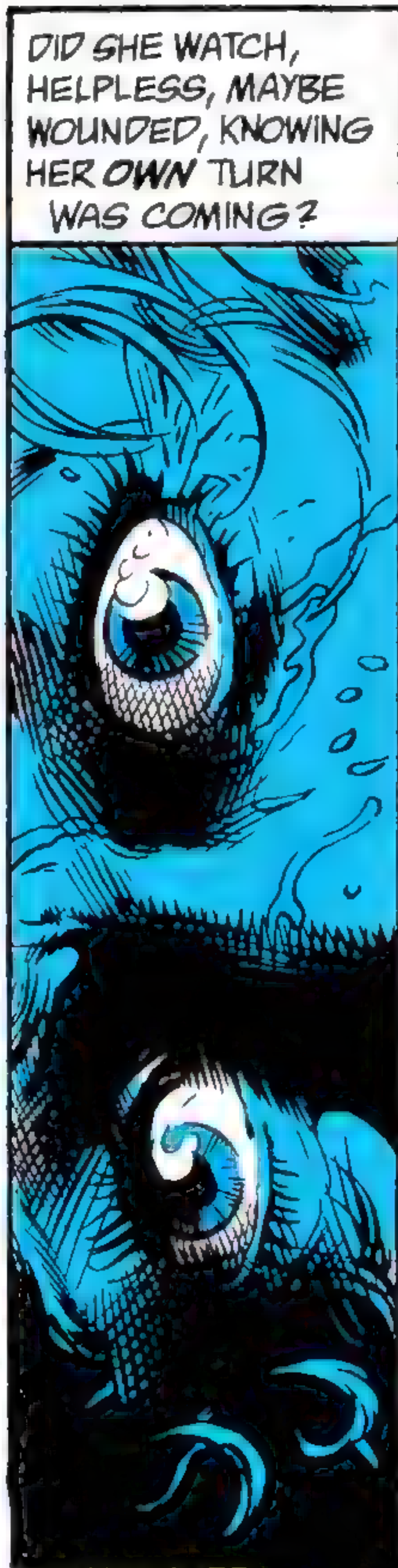


HOW DID
MY PARENTS
DIE ?



WAS THERE A MOMENT WHEN THEY *KNEW*, KNEW FOR SURE, IT WAS OVER?

DID MY MOTHER WATCH AS HE RIPPED OPEN MY FATHER'S THROAT?



DID SHE WATCH, HELPLESS, MAYBE WOUNDED, KNOWING HER OWN TURN WAS COMING?



ONLY TROY GRENZER KNEW THAT.

AH...HOLD ON A MINUTE. JUST A MINUTE, FELLAS. I JUST WANNA FEW MORE MINUTES...

SORRY, GRENZER. GOT A SCHEDULE TO KEEP...



NO, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I'VE CHANGED MY MIND. I THINK MAYBE I *WILL* TRY FOR A REPRIEVE, MAYBE I'M NOT READY YET FOR...

IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT NOW, TROY!



NO! LET ME GO! NAAHHH!

GET HIS ARM, FLOYD...

GOT IT.

DON'T GET DIFFICULT NOW, BOY. AIN'T NO GOOD STRUGGLING...

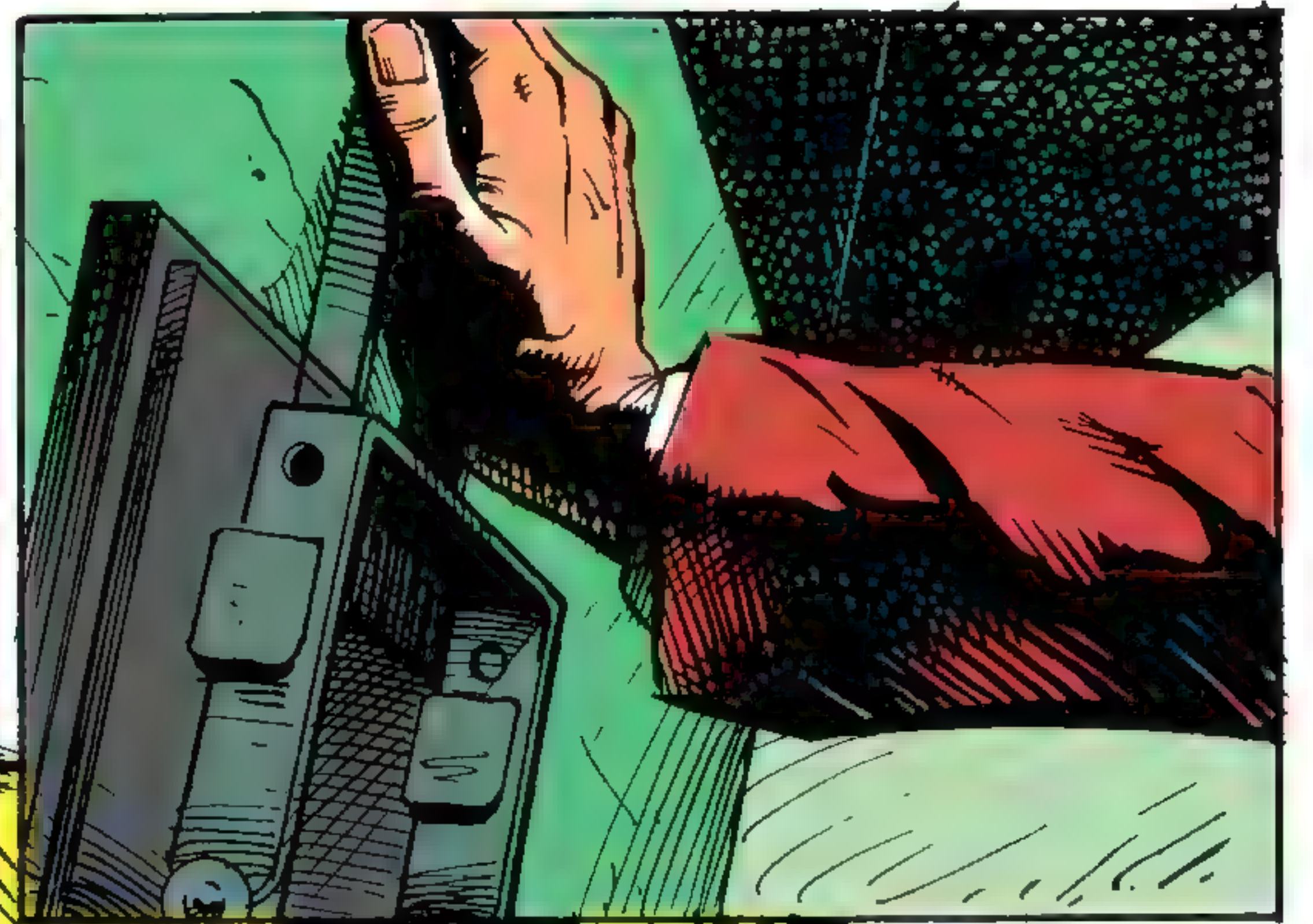


JESUS
HOLD HIS
LEGS HOLD
HIS LEGS!

OH GOD.
PLEASE GOD
NO PLEASE
I'M GORRY
PLEASE

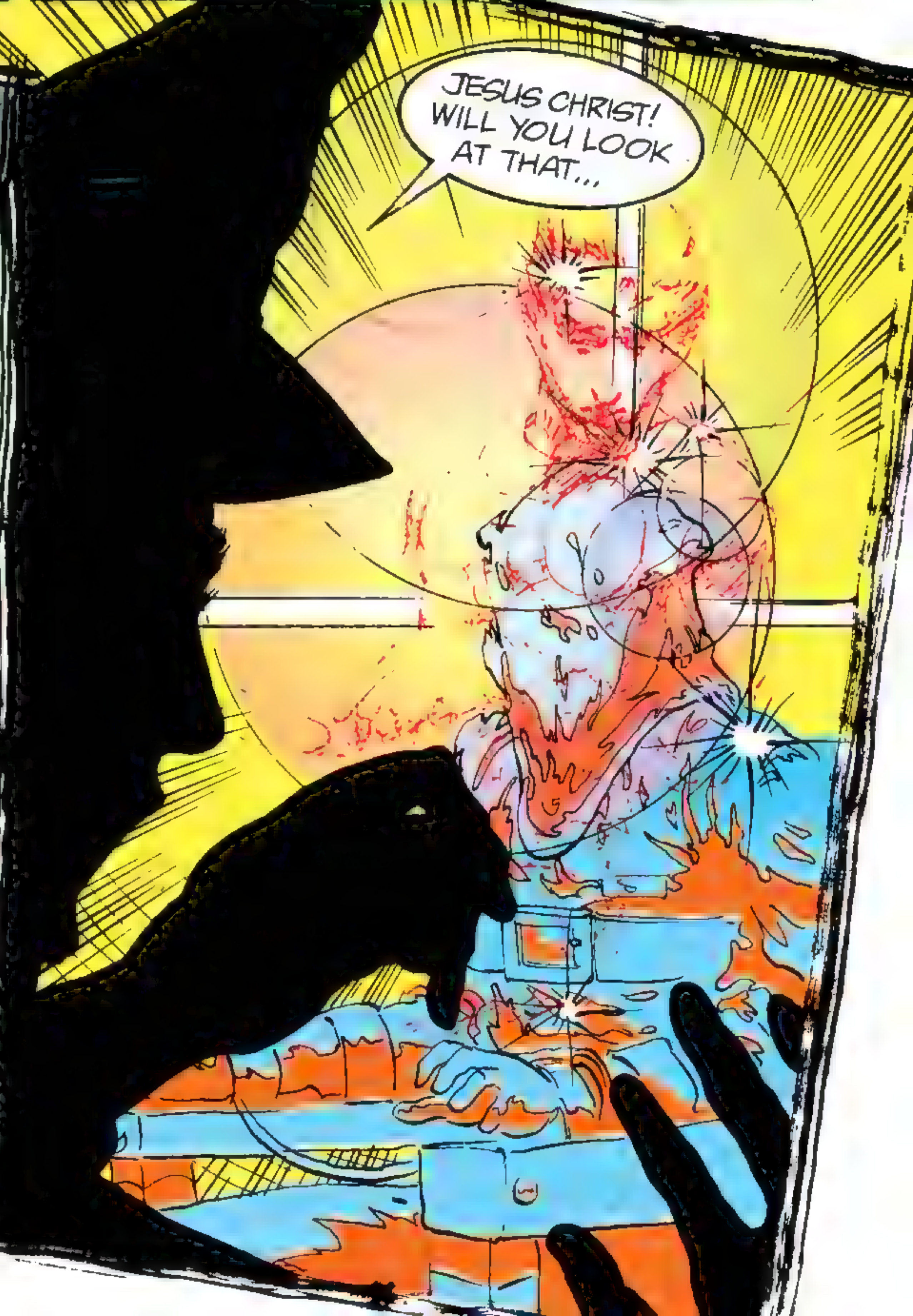


HHHMMNAGHH--

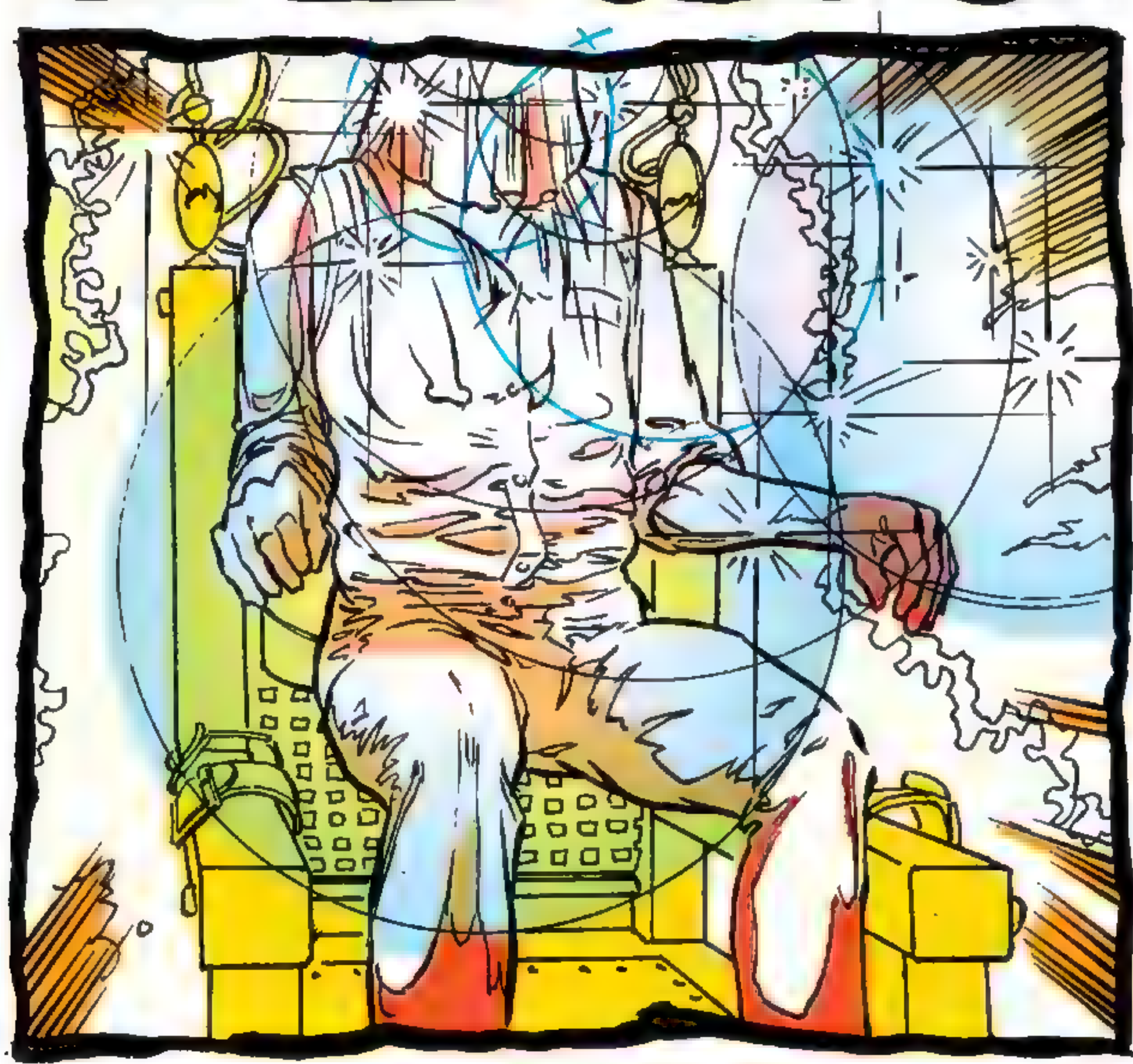
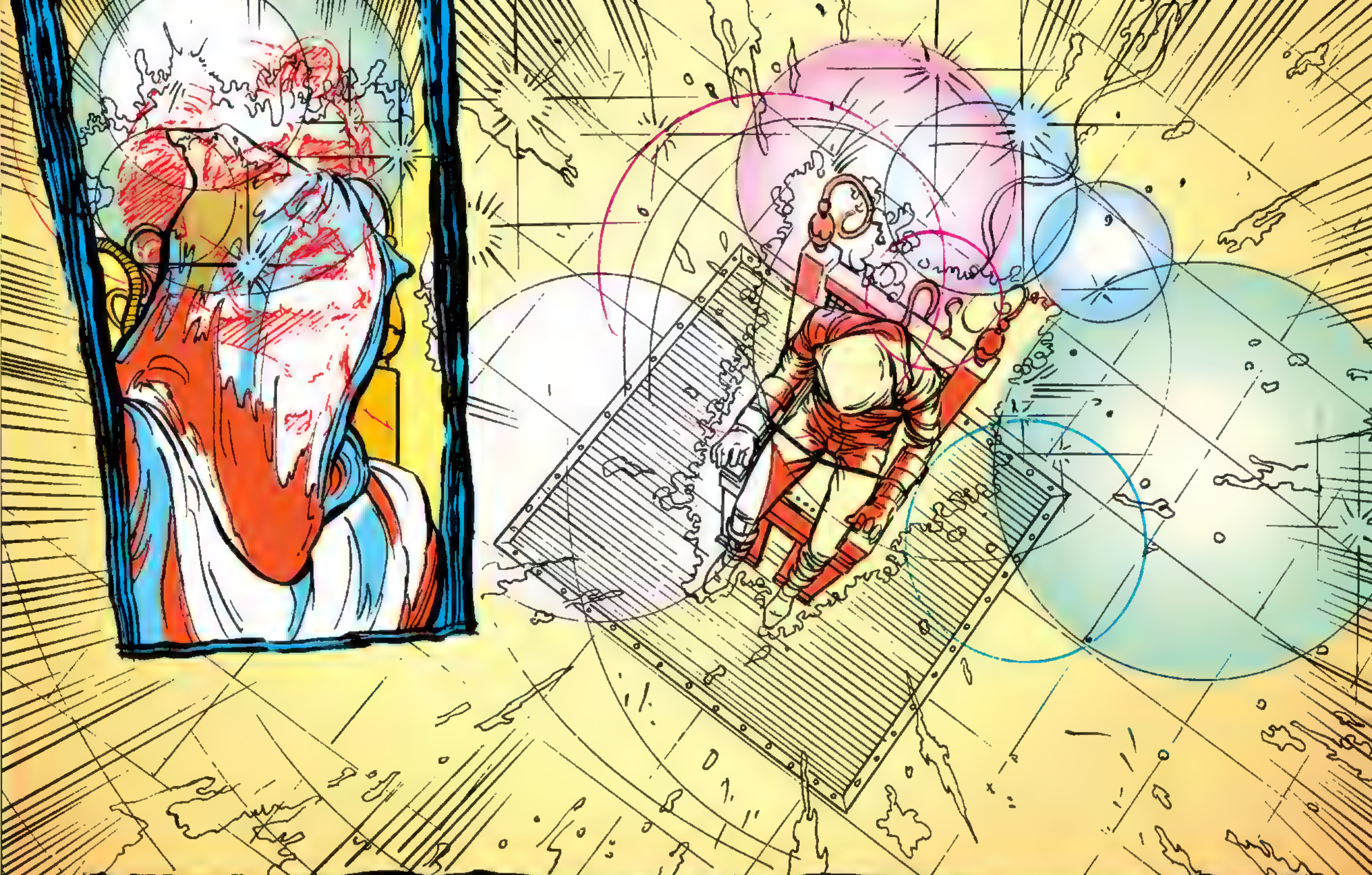


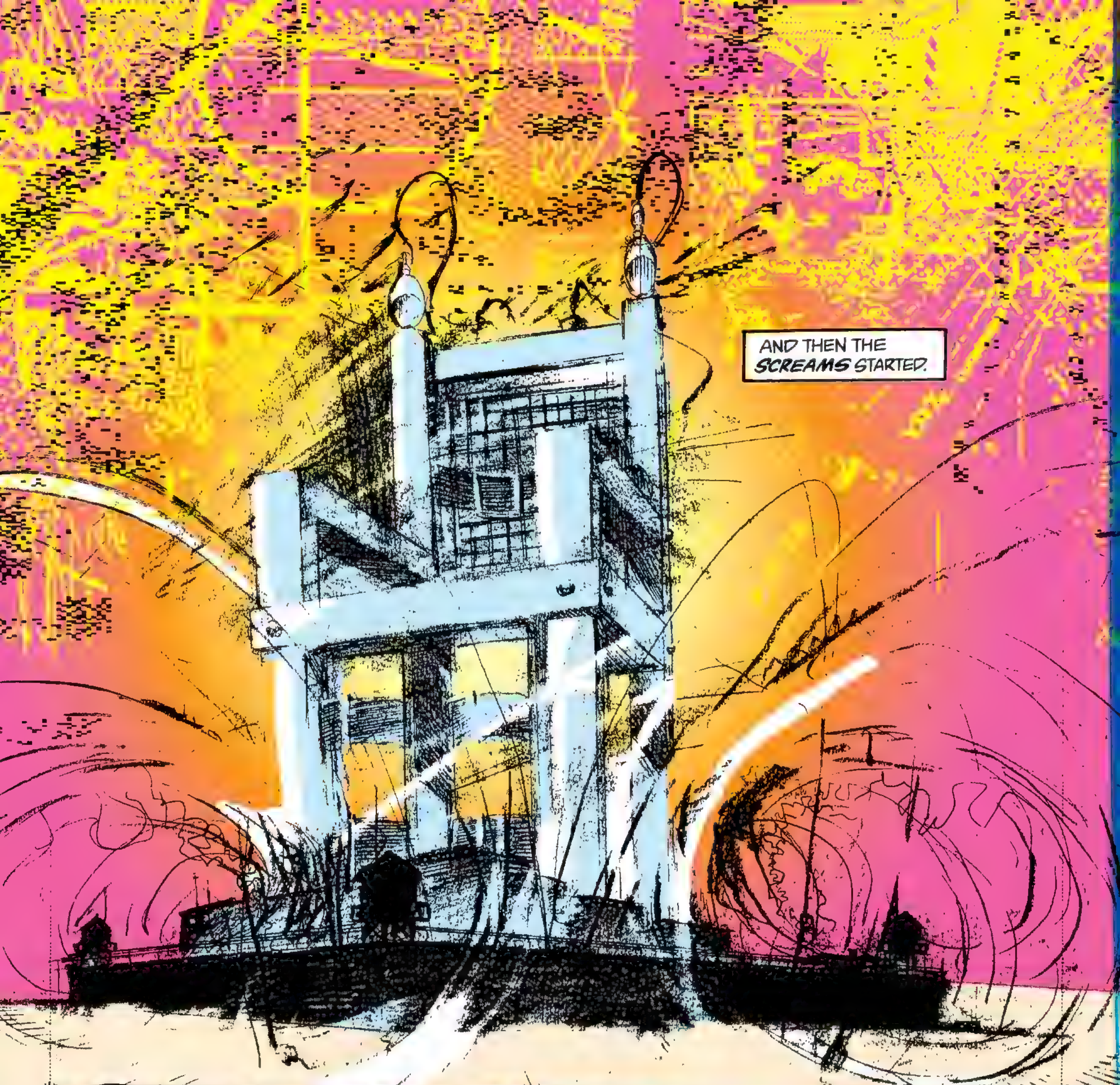
WHAT'S HAPPENING? IS IT WORKING?
CAN'T **SMELL** ANYTHING.

DON'T KNOW, SIR.
SOMETHING'S HAPPENING
TO HIM. MAYBE A HITCH
WITH THE **GENERATOR**.



JESUS CHRIST!
WILL YOU LOOK
AT THAT...





AND THEN THE
SCREAMS STARTED.

THE SCREAMS. THE
SHRIEKS. THE LAUGHTER.

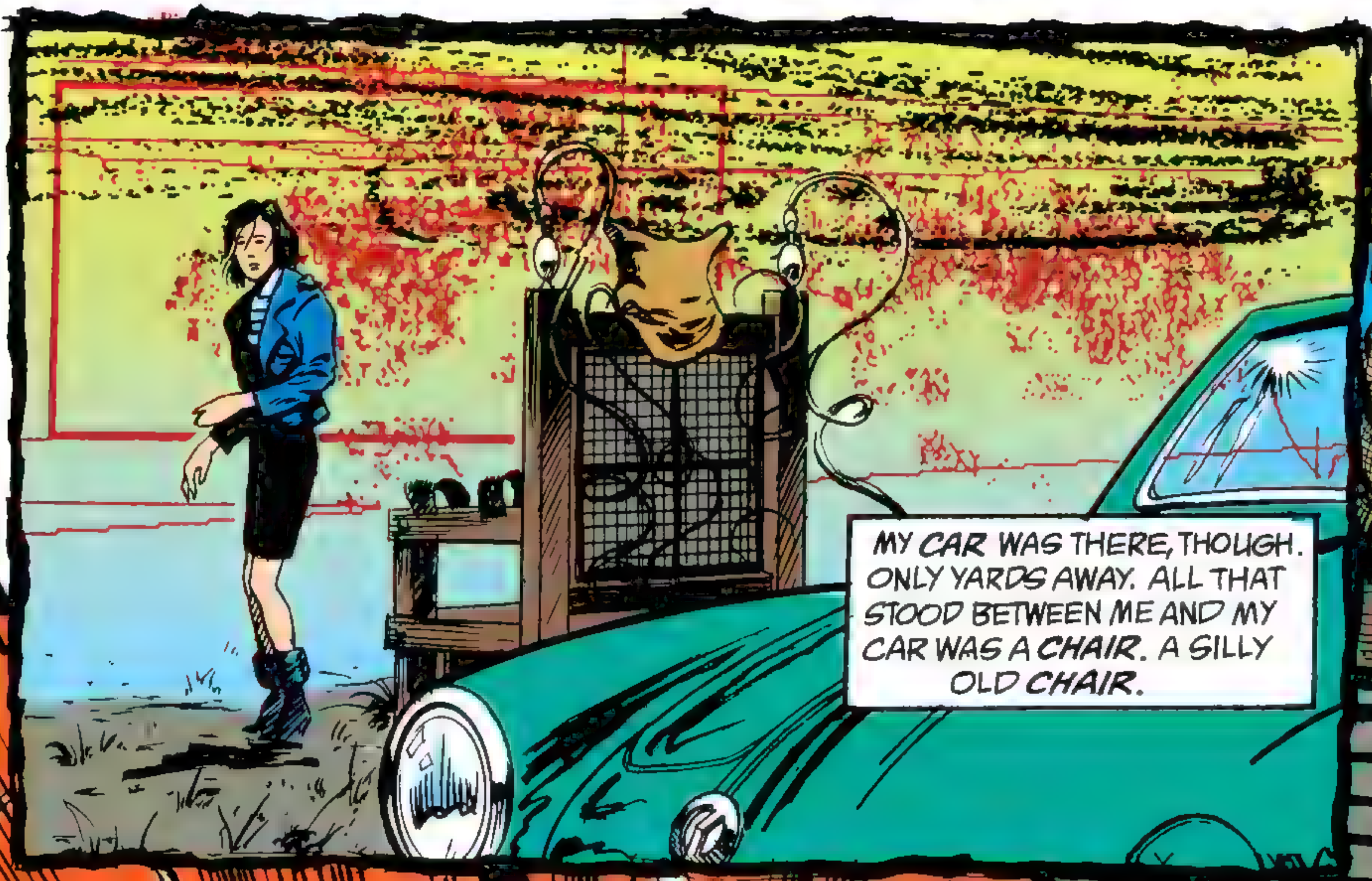
THE LAUGHTER?

TIME SPACE REASON
SANITY, NO. BUT LAUGHTER?

SURE, THERE
WAS LAUGHTER.

THAT COLD SKELETON
LAUGHTER YOU'VE
HEARD SINCE YOU
WERE A KID, SINCE
YOU WERE FIRST
ALONE IN THE DARK.

SINCE YOU FIRST REACHED
OUT FOR MOMMY AND
MOMMY WASN'T THERE.



MY CAR WAS THERE, THOUGH. ONLY YARDS AWAY. ALL THAT STOOD BETWEEN ME AND MY CAR WAS A CHAIR. A SILLY OLD CHAIR.



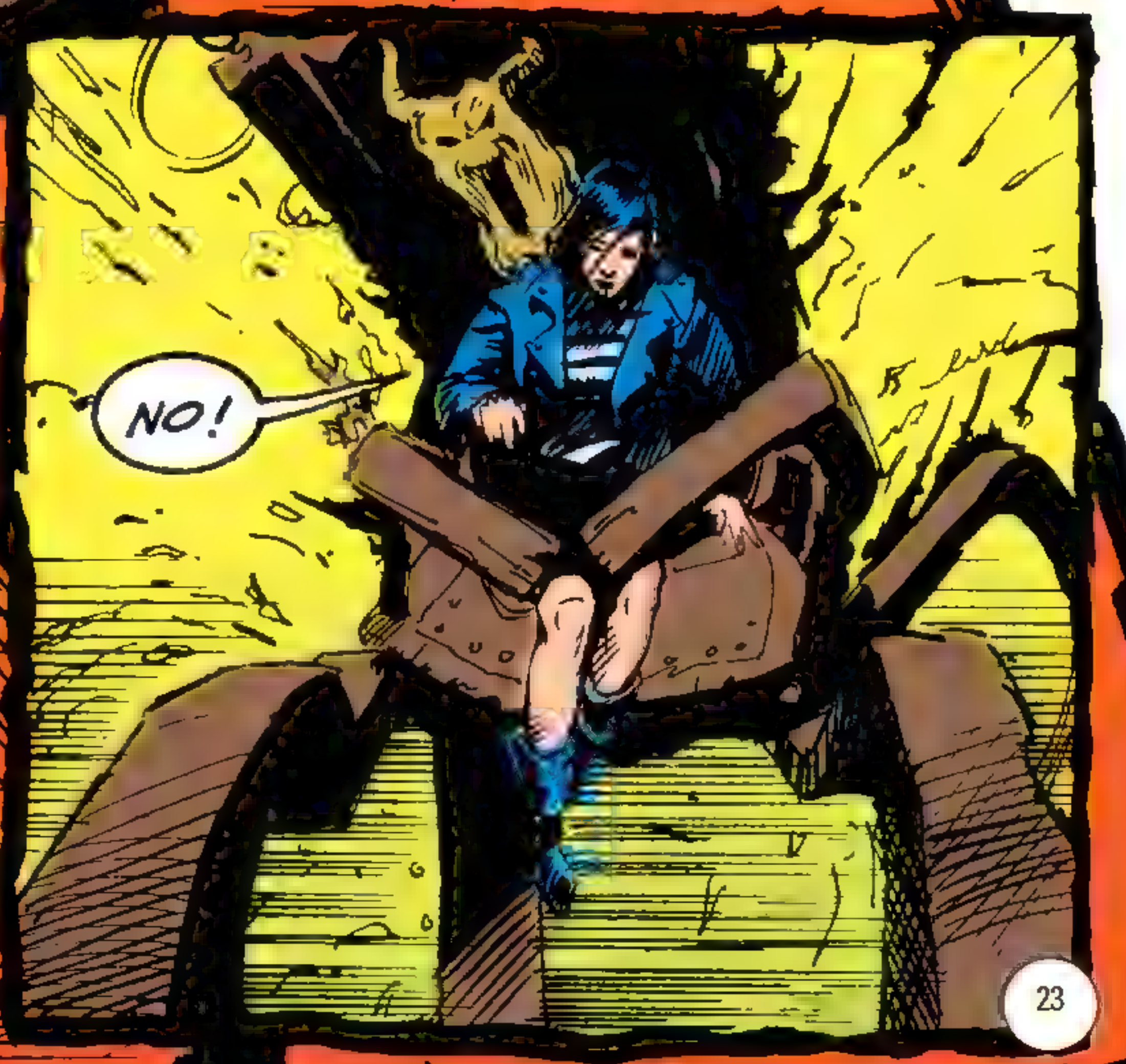
WITH A HOOD.

WITH A HOOD THAT WAS GRINNING AT ME.



OH NO. PLEASE.

NO.



NO!

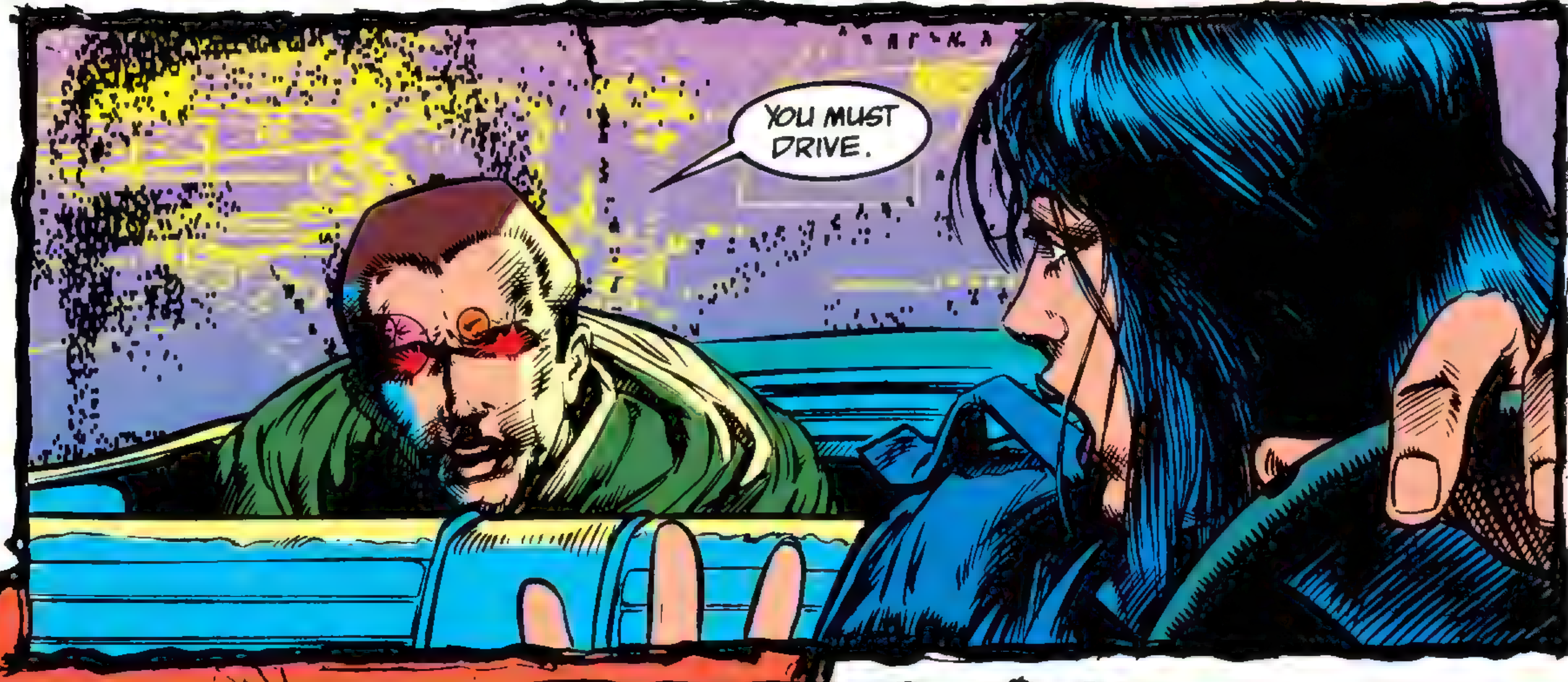


OH GOD
NO PLEASE
NO I'M SORRY
I'M

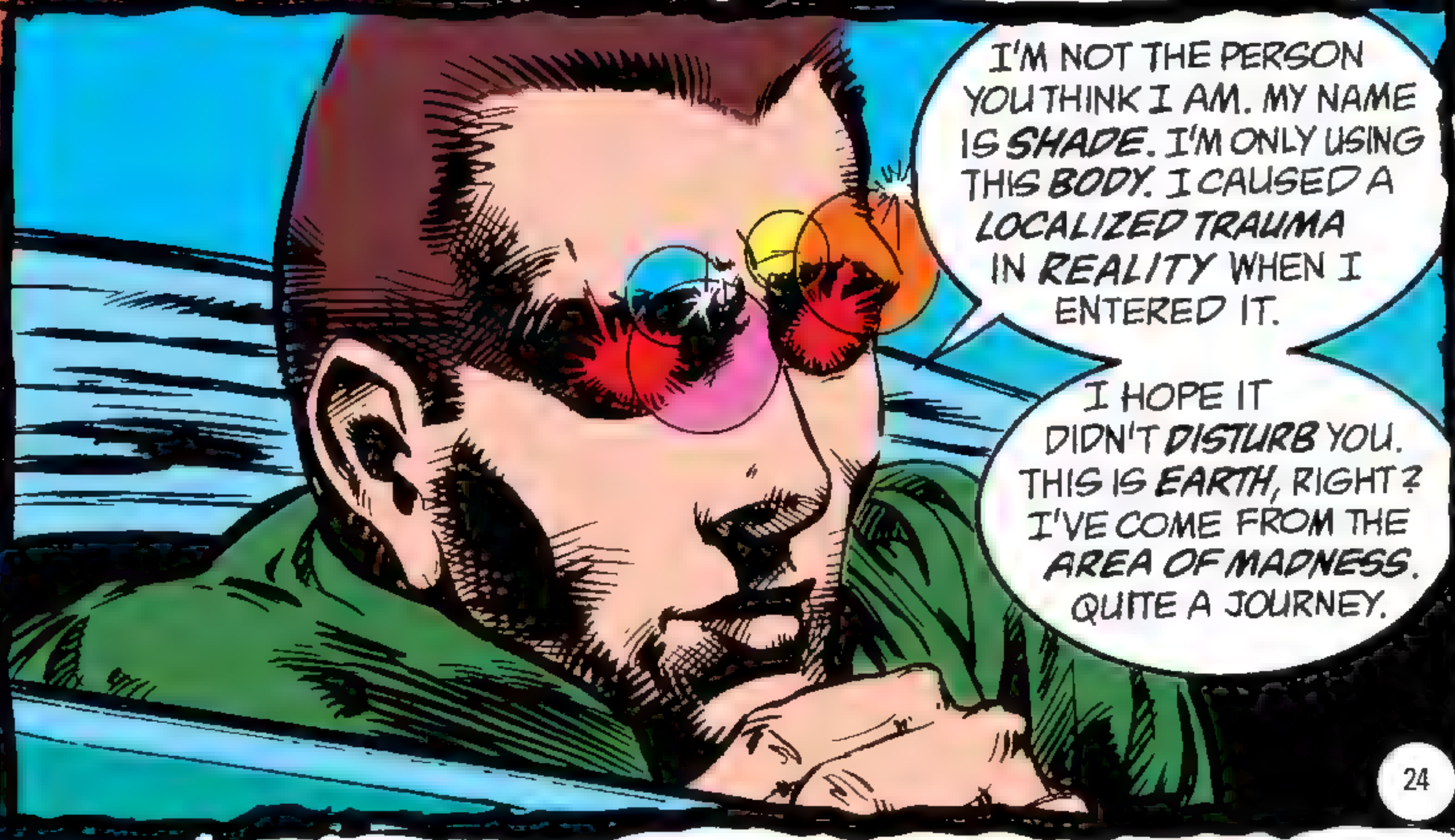


SORRY...

DRIVE.
PLEASE.

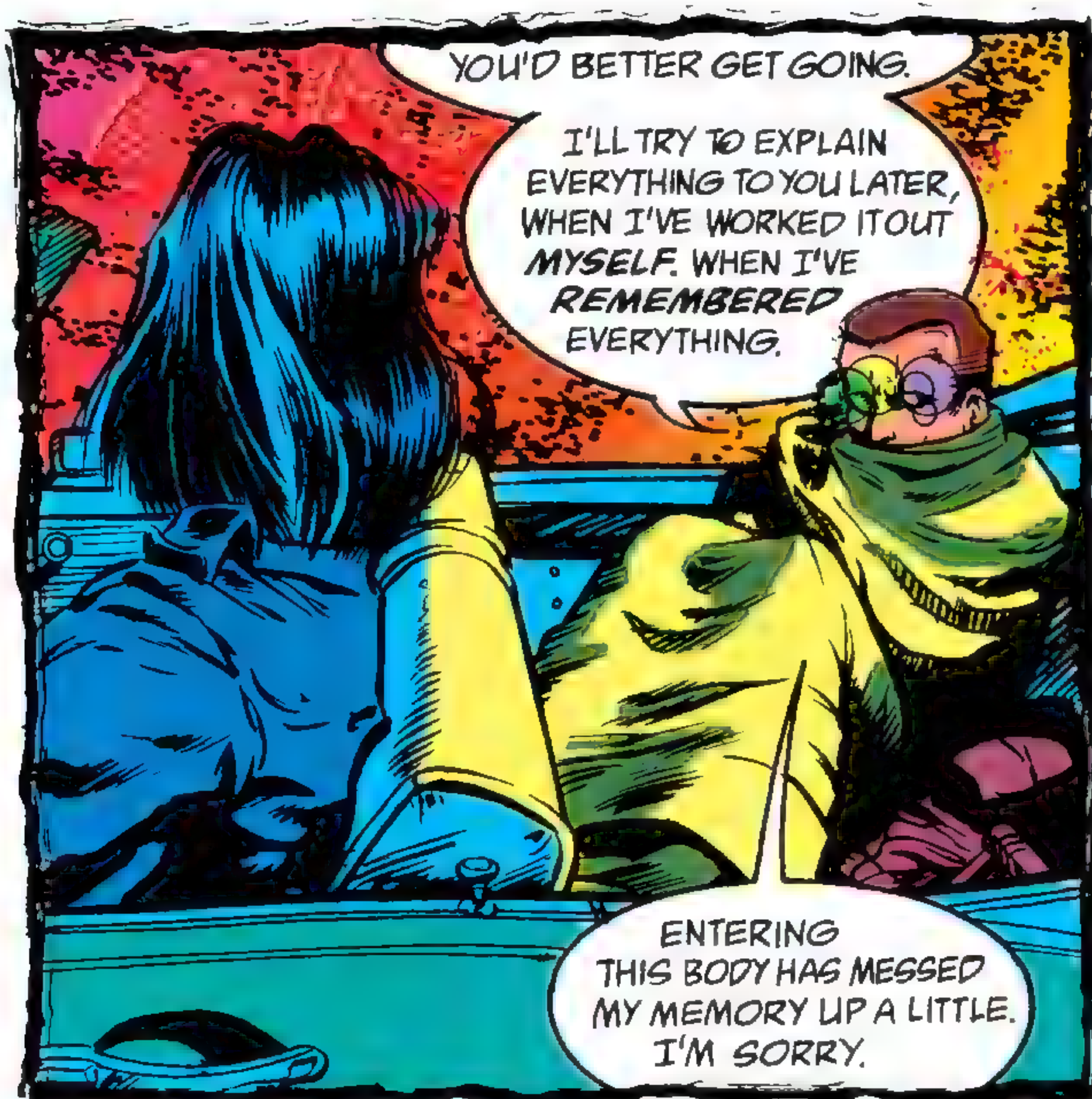


YOU MUST
DRIVE.



I'M NOT THE PERSON
YOU THINK I AM. MY NAME
IS *SHADE*. I'M ONLY USING
THIS *BODY*. I CAUSED A
LOCALIZED TRAUMA
IN *REALITY* WHEN I
ENTERED IT.

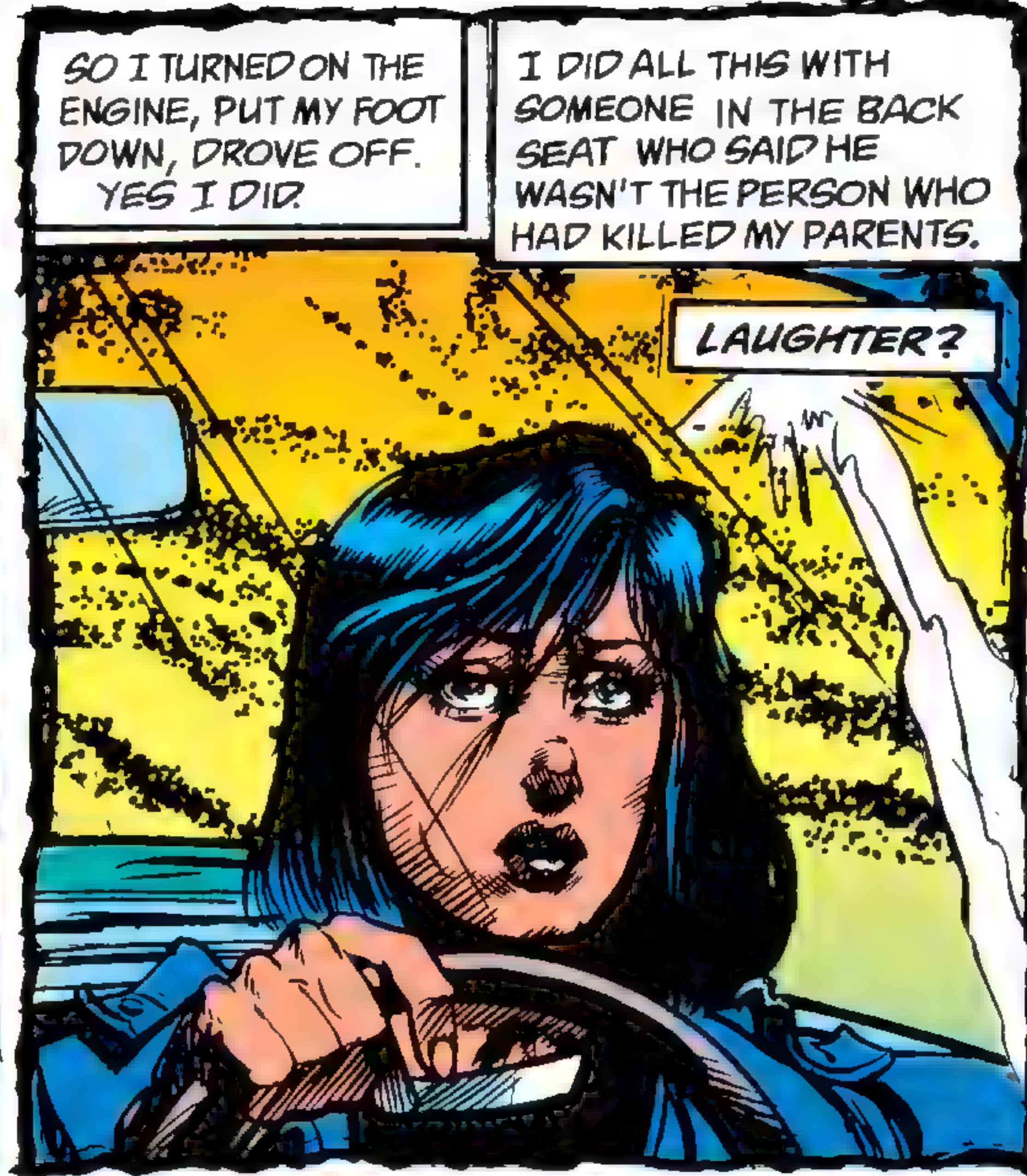
I HOPE IT
DIDN'T *DISTURB* YOU.
THIS IS *EARTH*, RIGHT?
I'VE COME FROM THE
AREA OF MADNESS.
QUITE A JOURNEY.



YOU'D BETTER GET GOING.

I'LL TRY TO EXPLAIN
EVERYTHING TO YOU LATER,
WHEN I'VE WORKED IT OUT
MYSELF. WHEN I'VE
REMEMBERED
EVERYTHING.

ENTERING
THIS BODY HAS MESSED
MY MEMORY UP A LITTLE.
I'M SORRY.



SO I TURNED ON THE
ENGINE, PUT MY FOOT
DOWN, DROVE OFF.
YES I DID.

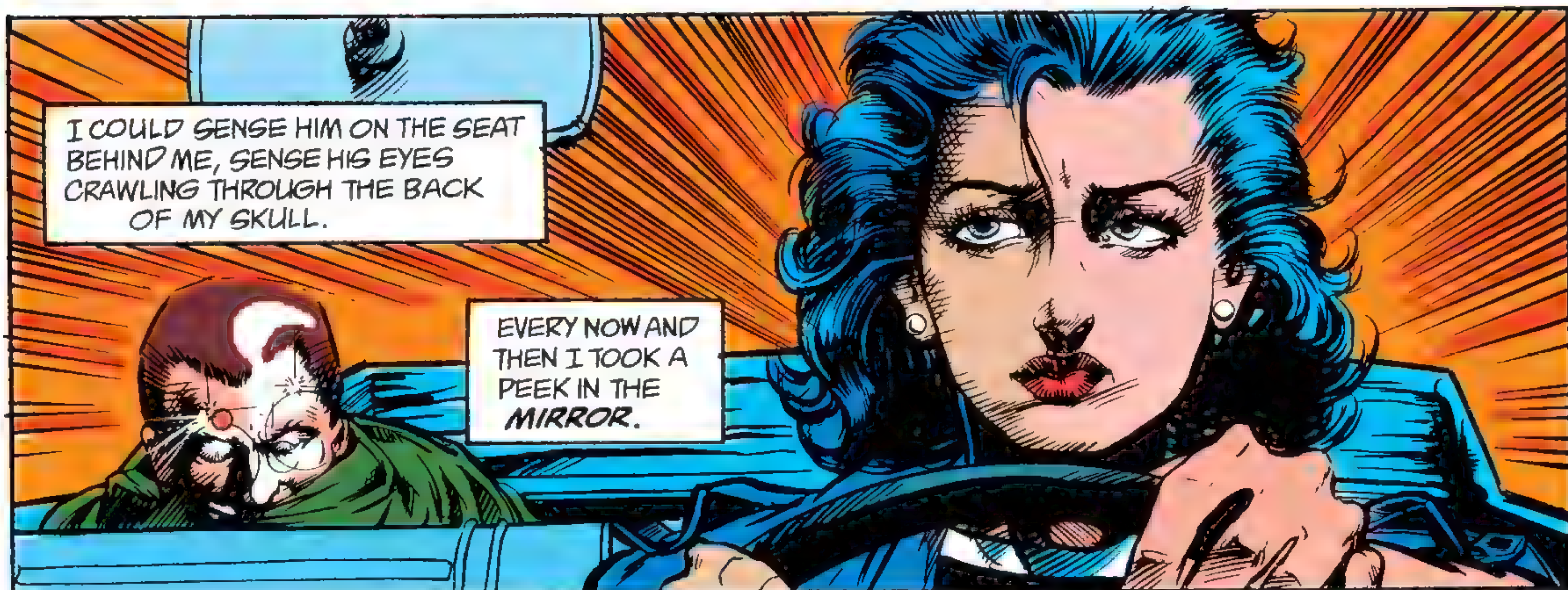
I DID ALL THIS WITH
SOMEONE IN THE BACK
SEAT WHO SAID HE
WASN'T THE PERSON WHO
HAD KILLED MY PARENTS.

LAUGHTER?



SURE, THERE WAS LAUGHTER.

LAUGHTER THAT SAID, JESUS, KATHY, HOW
COME THEY LET YOU OUT OF THE **MADHOUSE**?



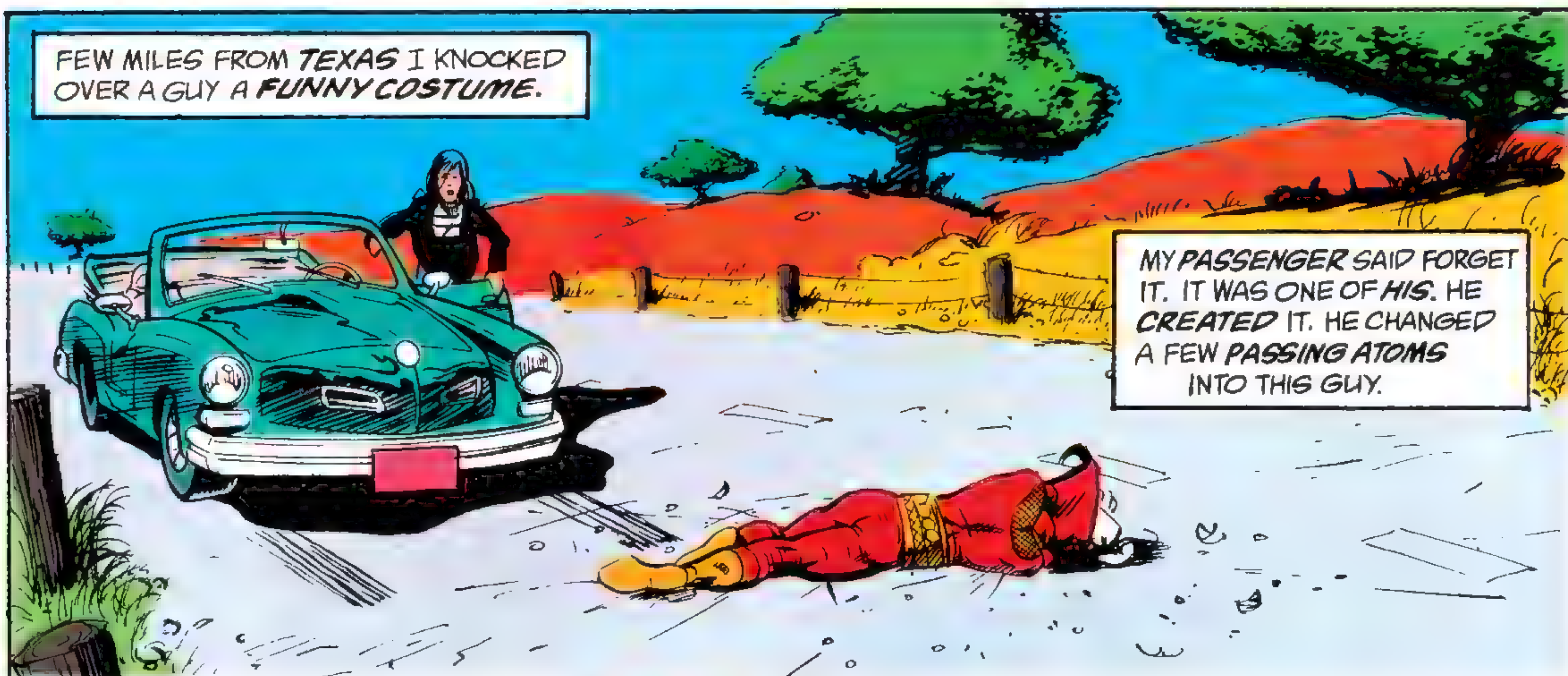
I COULD SENSE HIM ON THE SEAT
BEHIND ME, SENSE HIS EYES
CRAWLING THROUGH THE BACK
OF MY SKULL.

EVERY NOW AND
THEN I TOOK A
PEEK IN THE
MIRROR.



STARING AT ME THE WHOLE
TIME. AND I COULDN'T THINK.
THERE WAS NOTHING IN MY
HEAD. NOTHING EXCEPT **HIM.**

ALL I COULD DO WAS
DRIVE. I WAS **EMPTY.**
I WAS **NOTHING. NOTHING.**



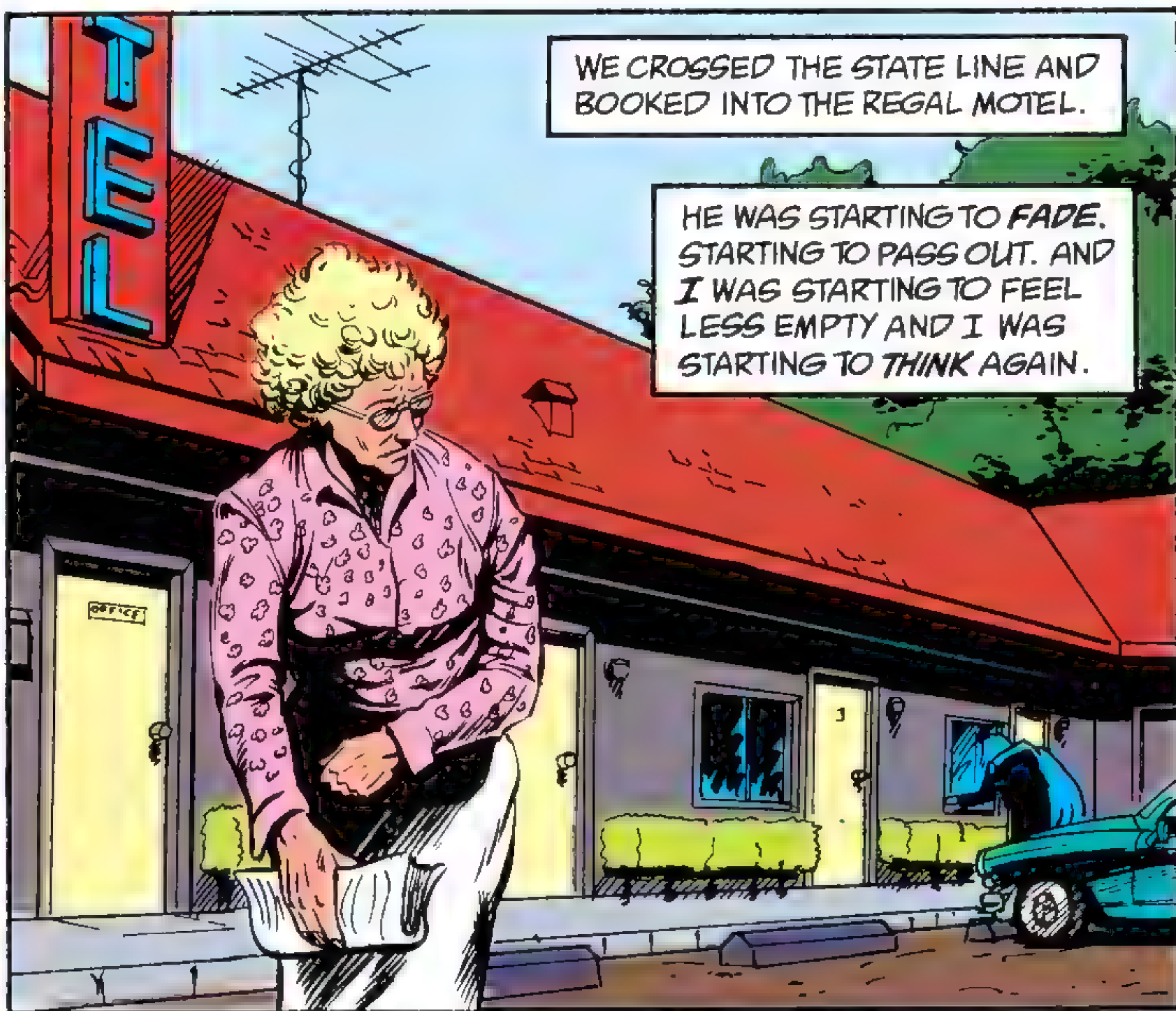
FEW MILES FROM *TEXAS* I KNOCKED OVER A GUY A *FUNNY COSTUME*.

MY PASSENGER SAID FORGET IT. IT WAS ONE OF *HIS*. HE *CREATED* IT. HE CHANGED A FEW *PASSING ATOMS* INTO THIS GUY.



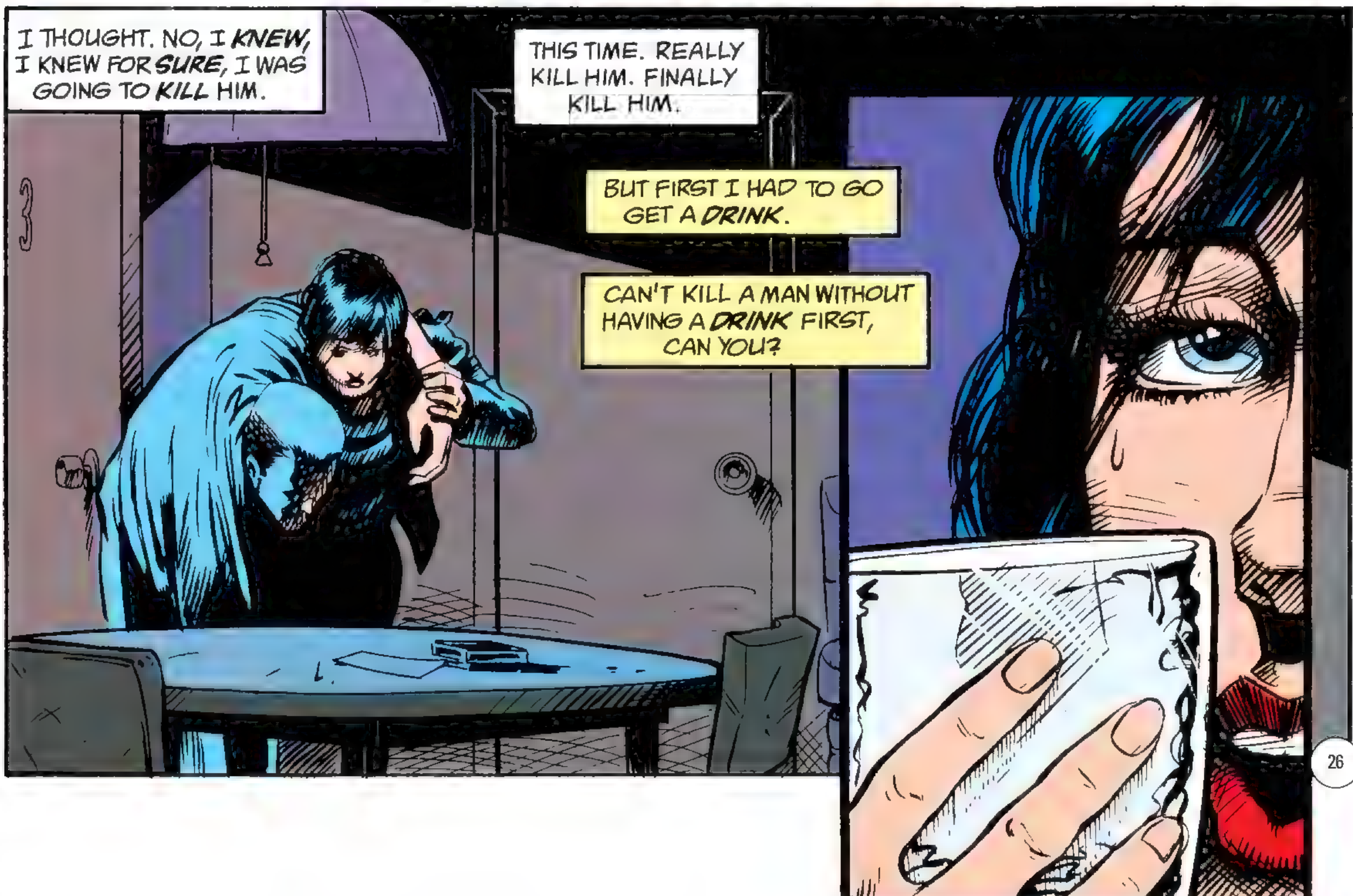
HE DIDN'T *MEAN* TO. IT WAS THE *M VEST*. THE *M VEST* WAS FROM THE AREA OF *MADNESS* TOO. IT WAS THE *M VEST* THAT MADE HIM DO IT.

THE *M VEST*. OF COURSE IT WAS.



WE CROSSED THE STATE LINE AND BOOKED INTO THE *REGAL MOTEL*.

HE WAS STARTING TO *FADE*. STARTING TO PASS OUT. AND I WAS STARTING TO FEEL LESS EMPTY AND I WAS STARTING TO *THINK* AGAIN.

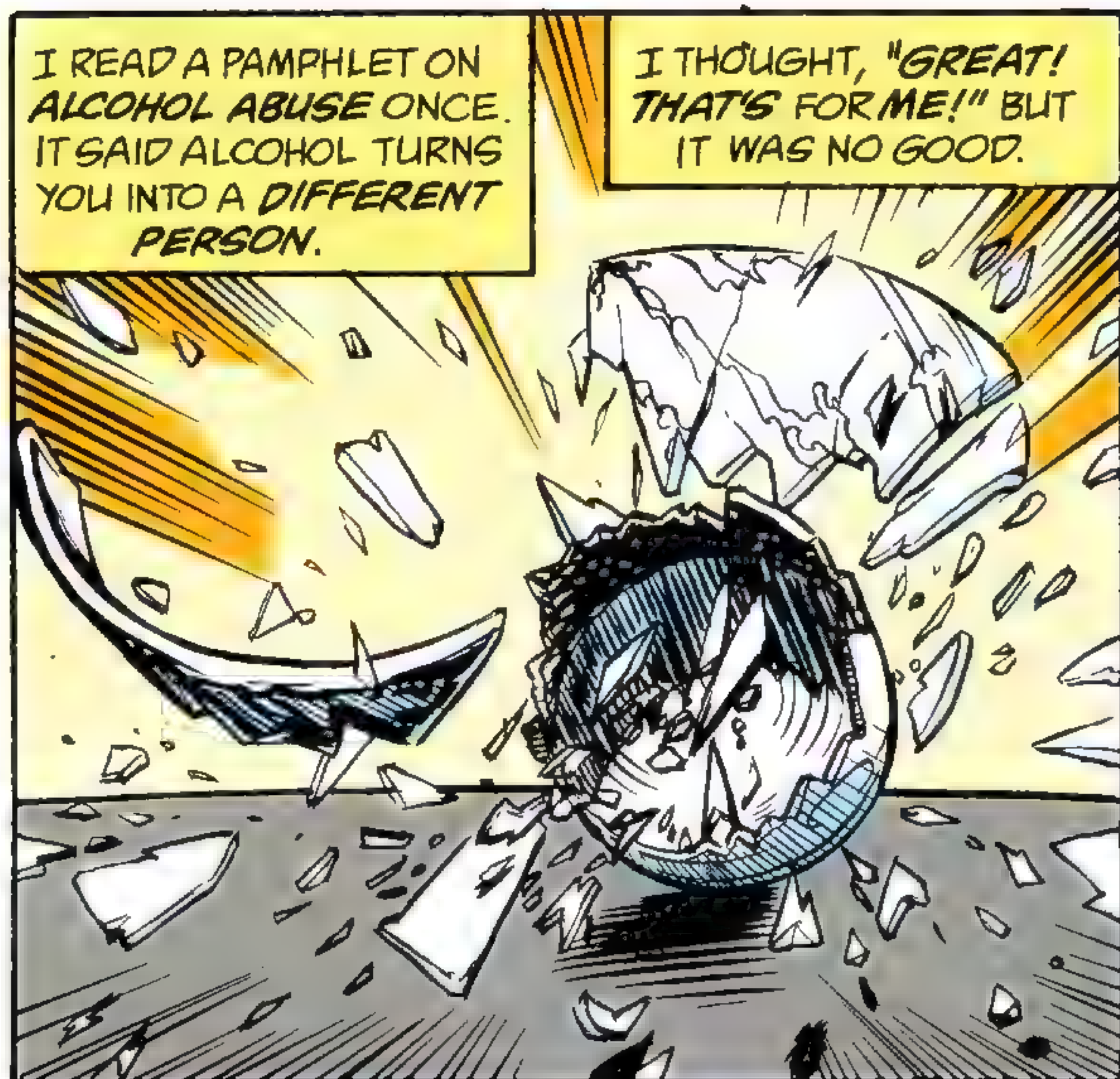


I THOUGHT. NO, I *KNEW*. I KNEW FOR *SURE*, I WAS GOING TO *KILL* HIM.

THIS TIME. REALLY KILL HIM. FINALLY KILL HIM.

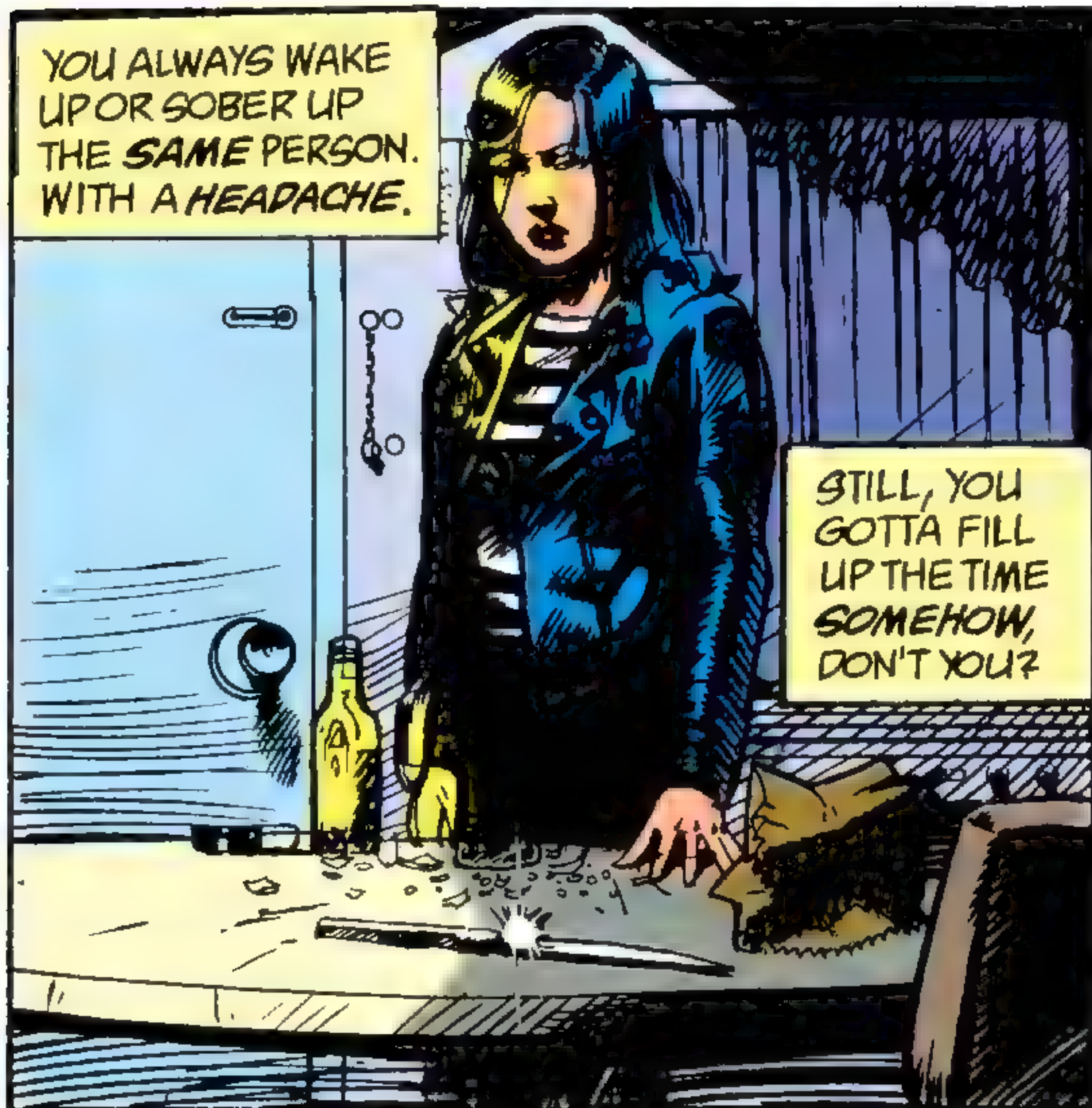
BUT FIRST I HAD TO GO GET A *DRINK*.

CAN'T KILL A MAN WITHOUT HAVING A *DRINK* FIRST, CAN YOU?



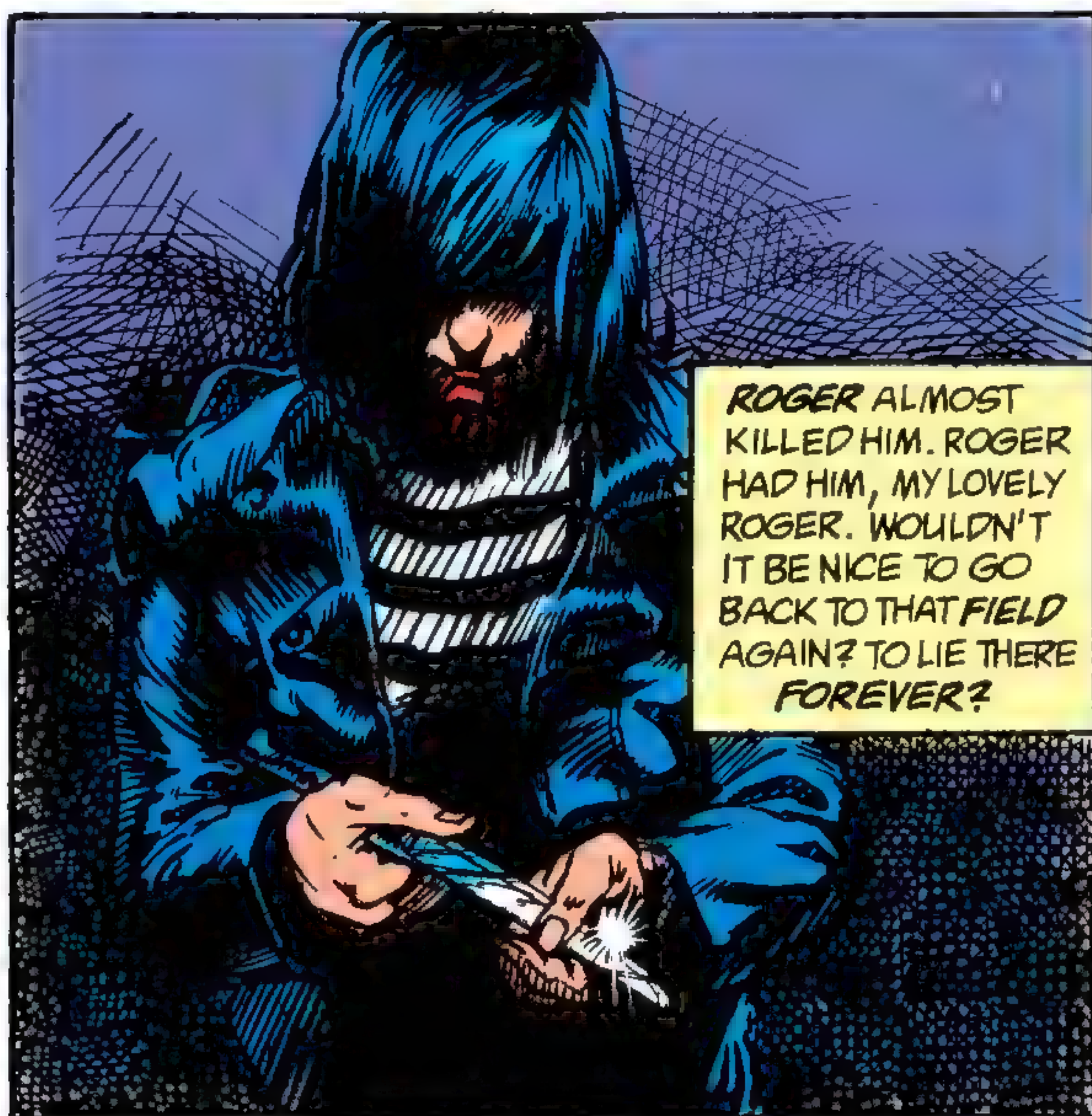
I READ A PAMPHLET ON ALCOHOL ABUSE ONCE. IT SAID ALCOHOL TURNS YOU INTO A DIFFERENT PERSON.

I THOUGHT, "GREAT! THAT'S FOR ME!" BUT IT WAS NO GOOD.



YOU ALWAYS WAKE UP OR SOBER UP THE SAME PERSON. WITH A HEADACHE.

STILL, YOU GOTTA FILL UP THE TIME SOMEHOW, DON'T YOU?



ROGER ALMOST KILLED HIM. ROGER HAD HIM, MY LOVELY ROGER. WOULDN'T IT BE NICE TO GO BACK TO THAT FIELD AGAIN? TO LIE THERE FOREVER?



ROGER'S FAMILY HATED ME AFTERWARDS. SAID I'D KILLED HIM. SAID I'D TAKEN HIM DOWN SOUTH JUST TO PROVE HOW LIBERAL AND COOL I WAS.

I DON'T BLAME THEM FOR THINKING THAT. THEY MIGHT EVEN BE RIGHT. I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ANYMORE.



YES. YES, I DO KNOW SOMETHING. I KNOW I'M GOING TO TRY, THIS TIME REALLY TRY TO KILL HIM.

THIS TIME, MAYBE HE'LL STOP COMING TO ME EVERY NIGHT. THIS TIME.



ONE OF US HAS TO DIE. IF HE DOESN'T, I REALLY CAN'T GO ON. I'M ALL LIVED OUT. PLEASE, THIS TIME...

MOM, DAD, IT'S ME.



I'M RICHARD CONLON, STUDENT AT FARMHOUSE MENTAL HOSPITAL. IT STARTED A FEW HOURS AGO. STARTED SCREAMING.

I HOPE... I HOPE SOMEONE FINDS THIS TAPE AND CAN STOP... CAN STOP WHATEVER IT IS THAT'S ARRIVED HERE.

"HAIR STOOD UP ALL OVER, SPINE TINGLED, FELT LIKE AN ANIMAL. IT'S THE MADNESS. YEAH, THE MADNESS IS ESCAPING.

"ALL THE MADNESS LOCKED UP IN THIS PLACE, IT'S GOING TO BLOW.



CAN YOU HEAR THE SCREAMS? LOUDER NOW. IT WON'T BE LONG, WHOLE PLACE IS GOING TO EXPLODE.

THE WALLS SHOOK WITH THE SCREAMING. WE ALL KNEW SOMETHING WAS GOING TO HAPPEN. CAN'T EXPLAIN HOW, JUST KNEW.



"REACHING CRITICAL MASS, CRITICAL MASS HYSTERIA, HAH HAH, CAN STILL JOKE. MAY AS WELL JOKE NOW.

I ASKED ONE OF THE PATIENTS WHAT WAS HAPPENING. SHE SAID THE SCREAM HAD ARRIVED.

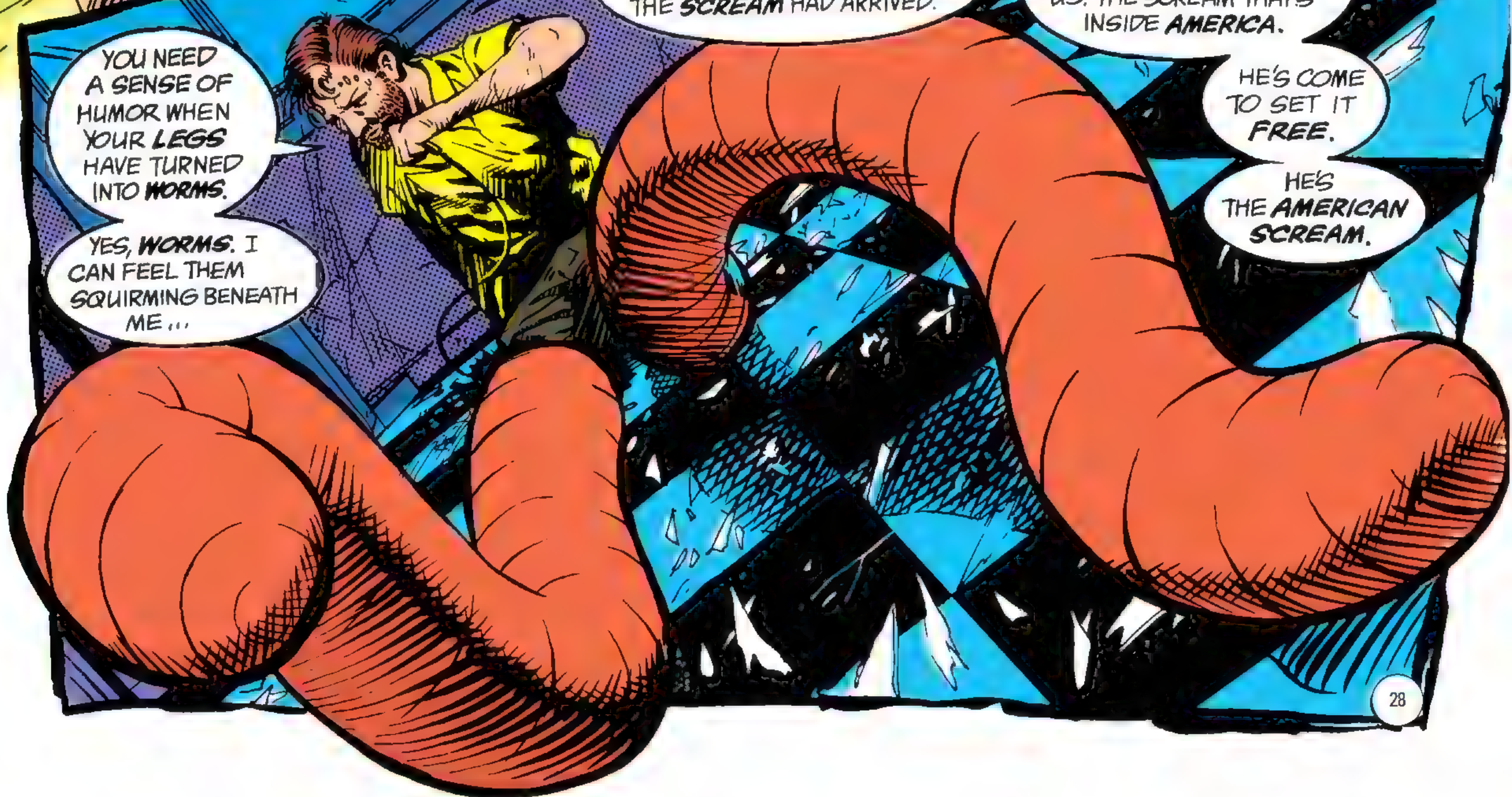
THE SCREAM THAT'S INSIDE ME, YOU, ALL OF US. THE SCREAM THAT'S INSIDE AMERICA.

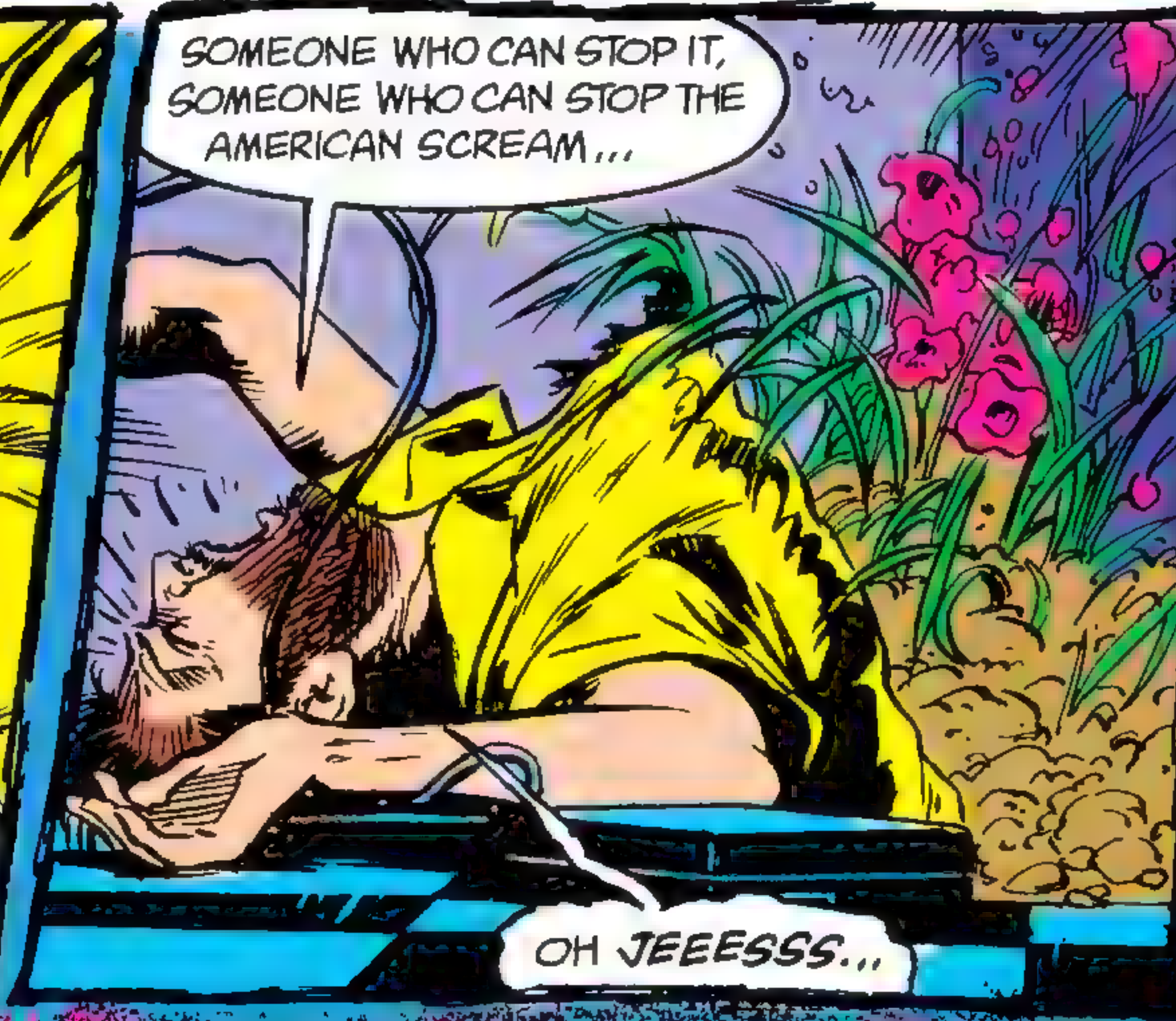
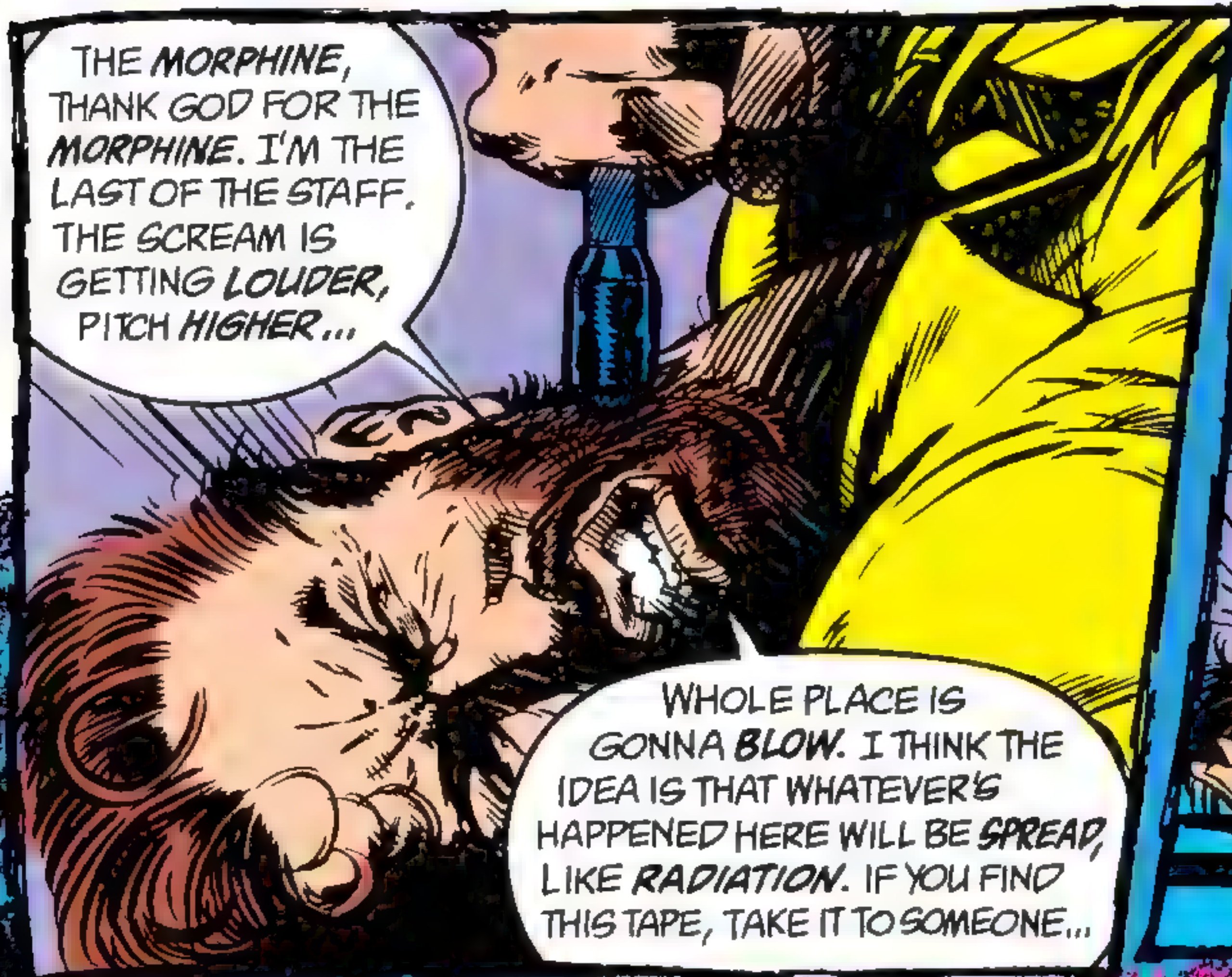
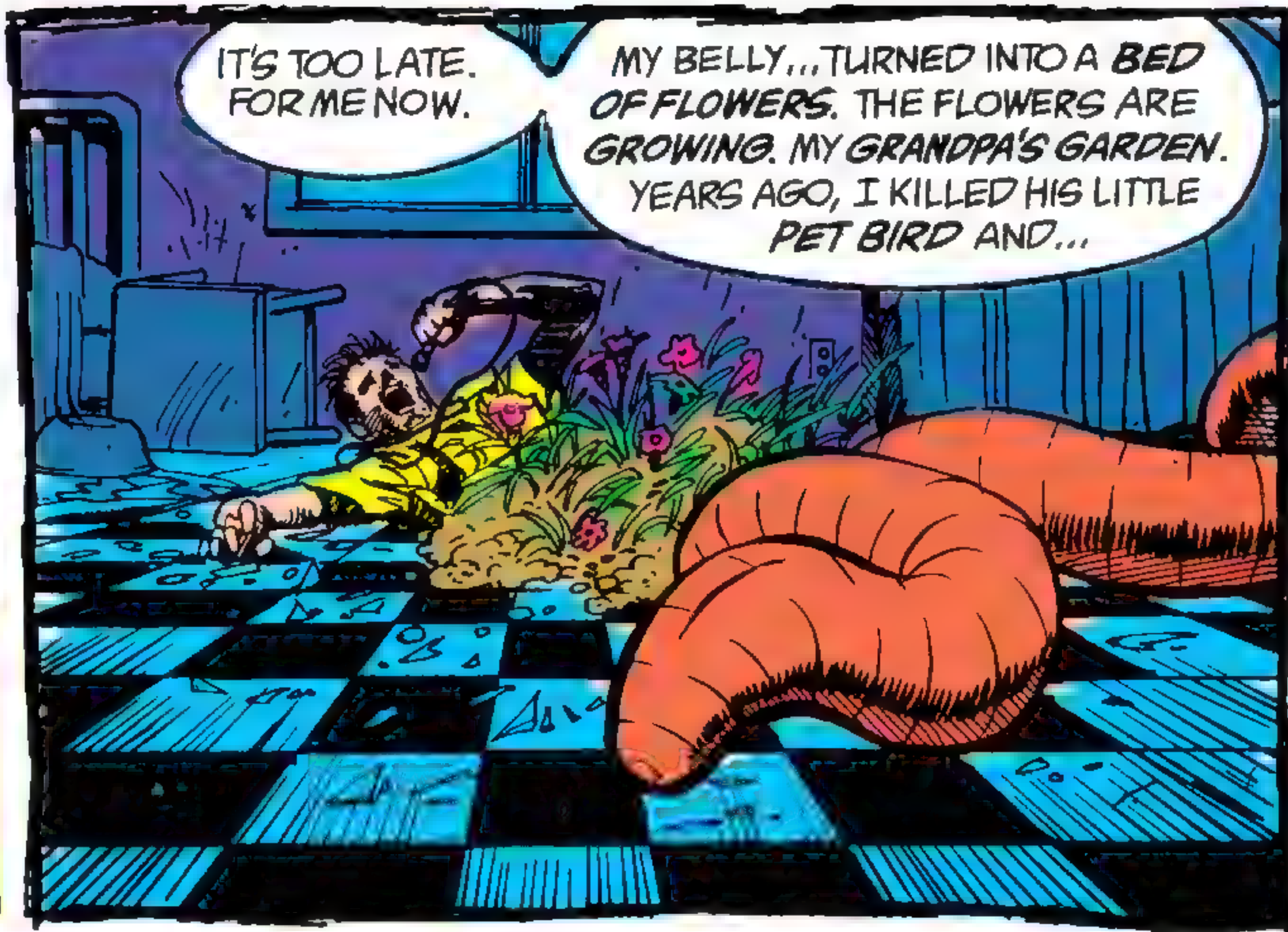
HE'S COME TO SET IT FREE.

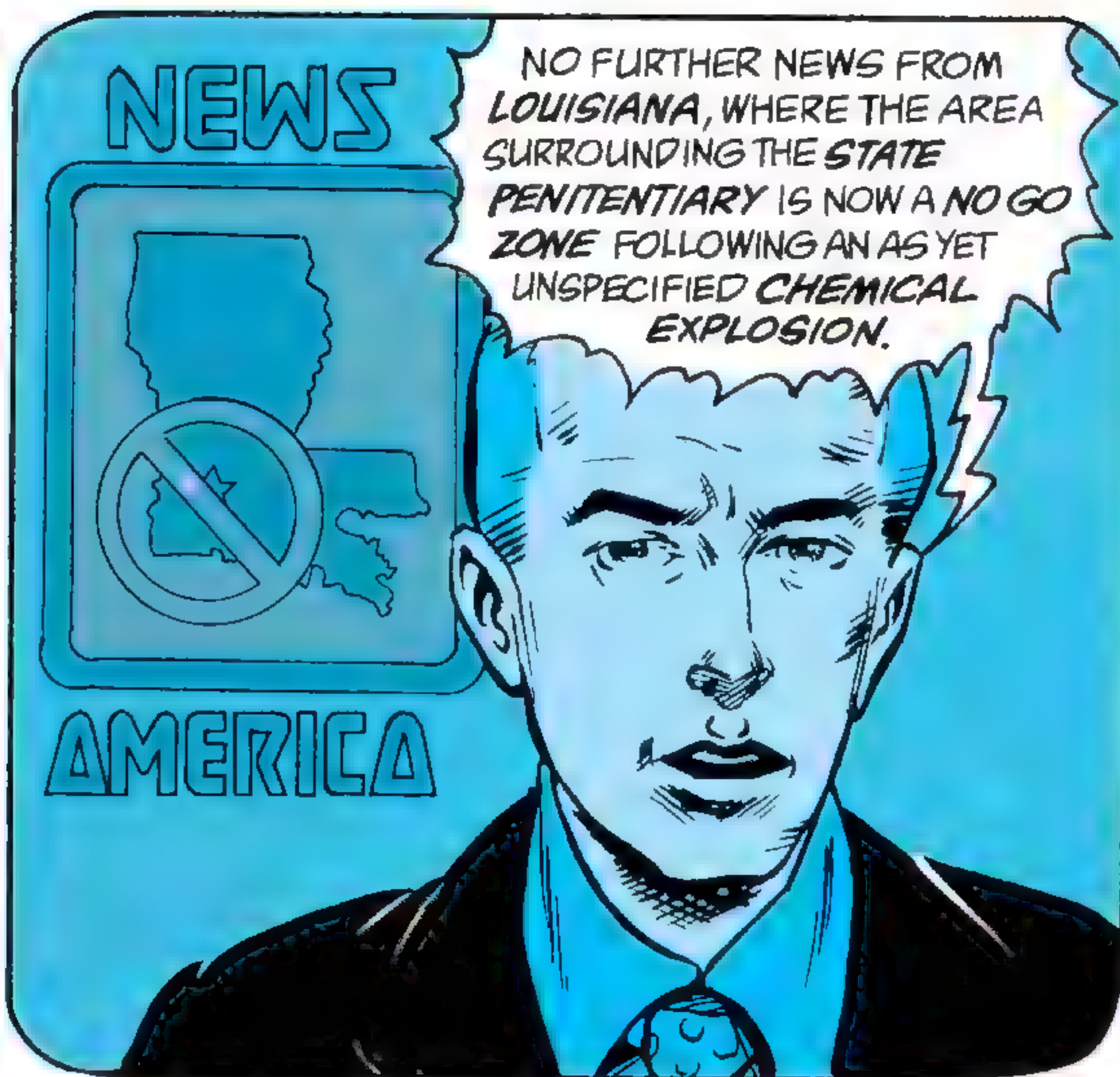
HE'S THE AMERICAN SCREAM.

YOU NEED A SENSE OF HUMOR WHEN YOUR LEGS HAVE TURNED INTO WORMS.

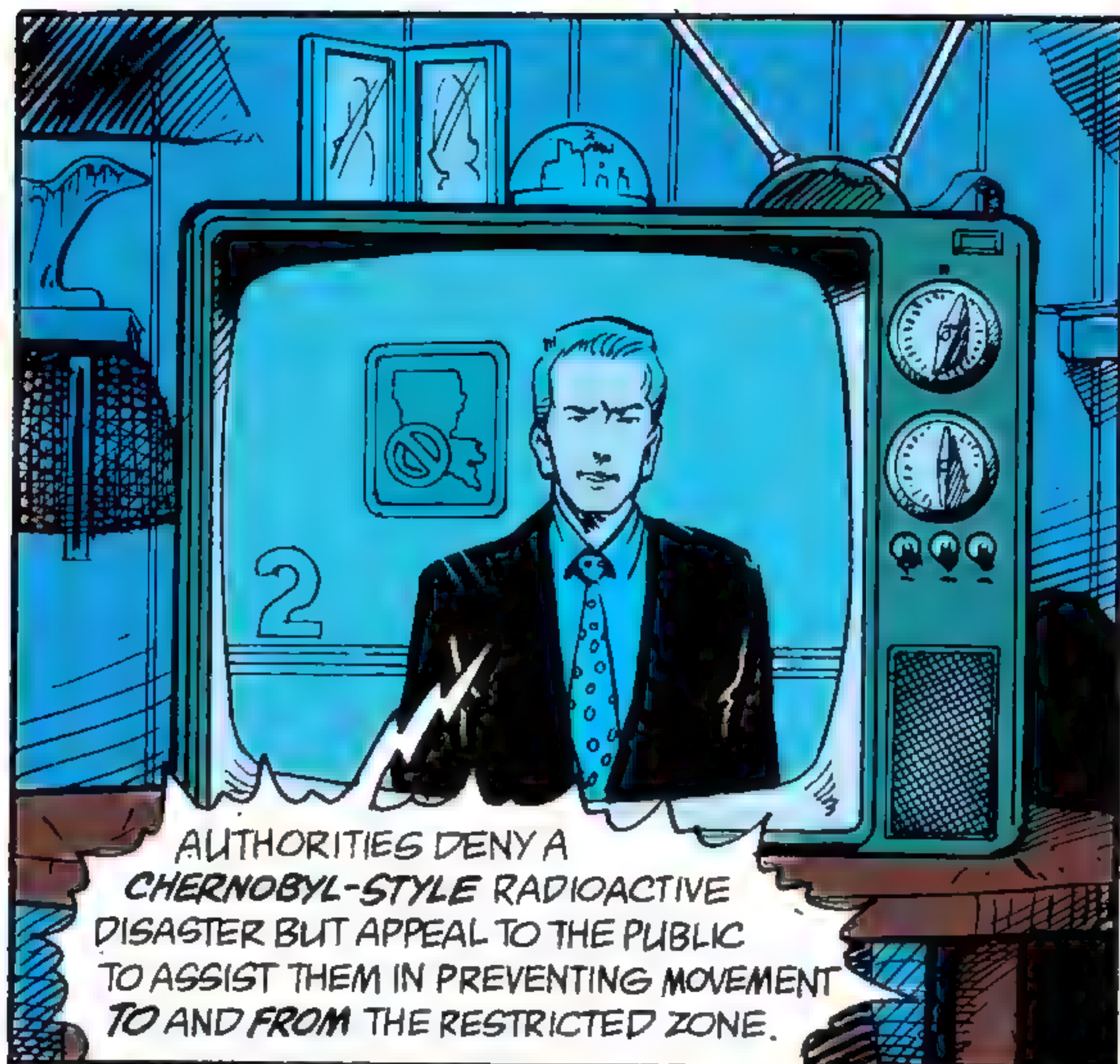
YES, WORMS. I CAN FEEL THEM SQUIRMING BENEATH ME...



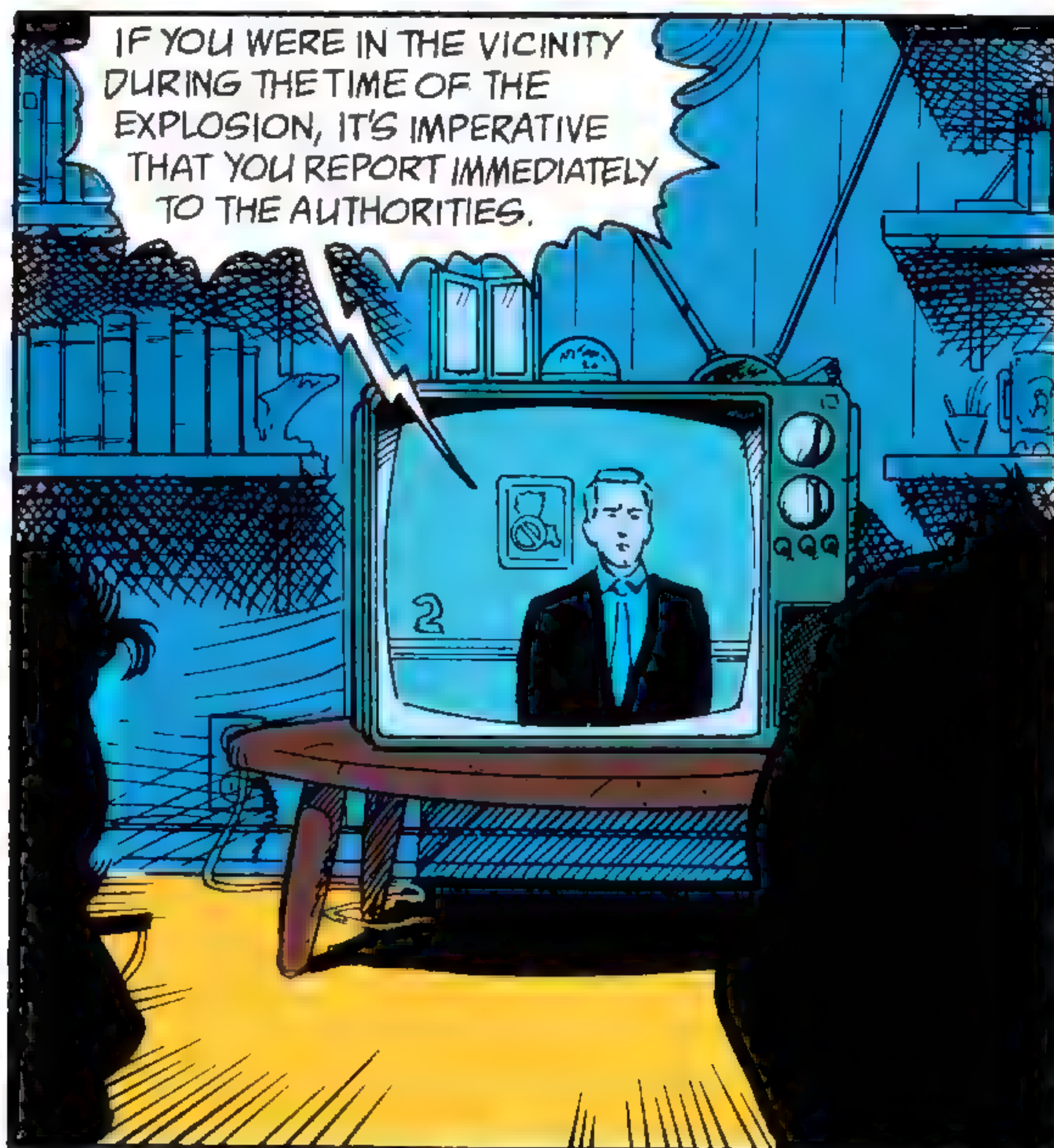




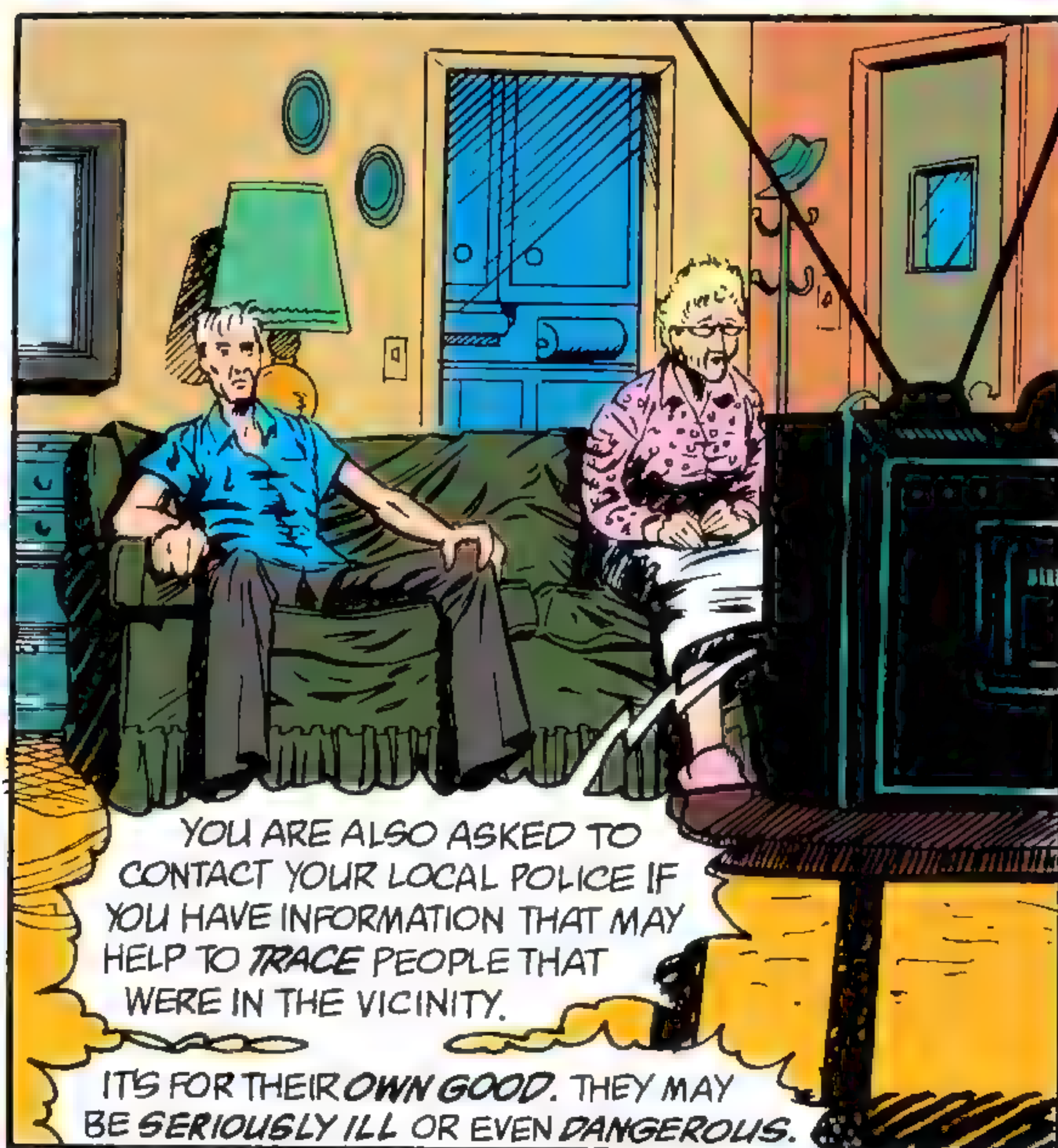
NO FURTHER NEWS FROM LOUISIANA, WHERE THE AREA SURROUNDING THE STATE PENITENTIARY IS NOW A NO GO ZONE FOLLOWING AN AS YET UNSPECIFIED CHEMICAL EXPLOSION.



AUTHORITIES DENY A CHERNOBYL-STYLE RADIOACTIVE DISASTER BUT APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC TO ASSIST THEM IN PREVENTING MOVEMENT TO AND FROM THE RESTRICTED ZONE.

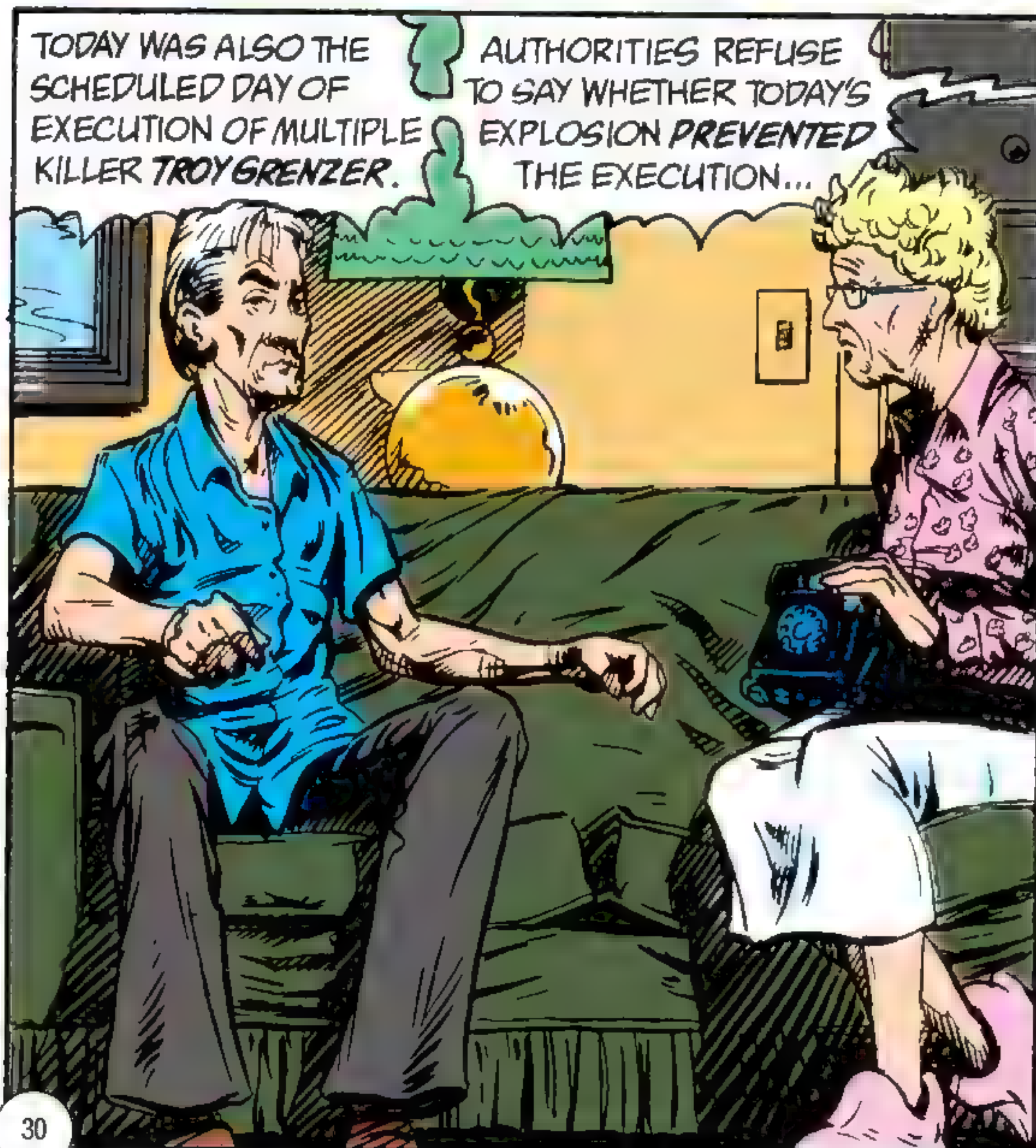


IF YOU WERE IN THE VICINITY DURING THE TIME OF THE EXPLOSION, IT'S IMPERATIVE THAT YOU REPORT IMMEDIATELY TO THE AUTHORITIES.



YOU ARE ALSO ASKED TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL POLICE IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION THAT MAY HELP TO TRACE PEOPLE THAT WERE IN THE VICINITY.

IT'S FOR THEIR OWN GOOD. THEY MAY BE SERIOUSLY ILL OR EVEN DANGEROUS.



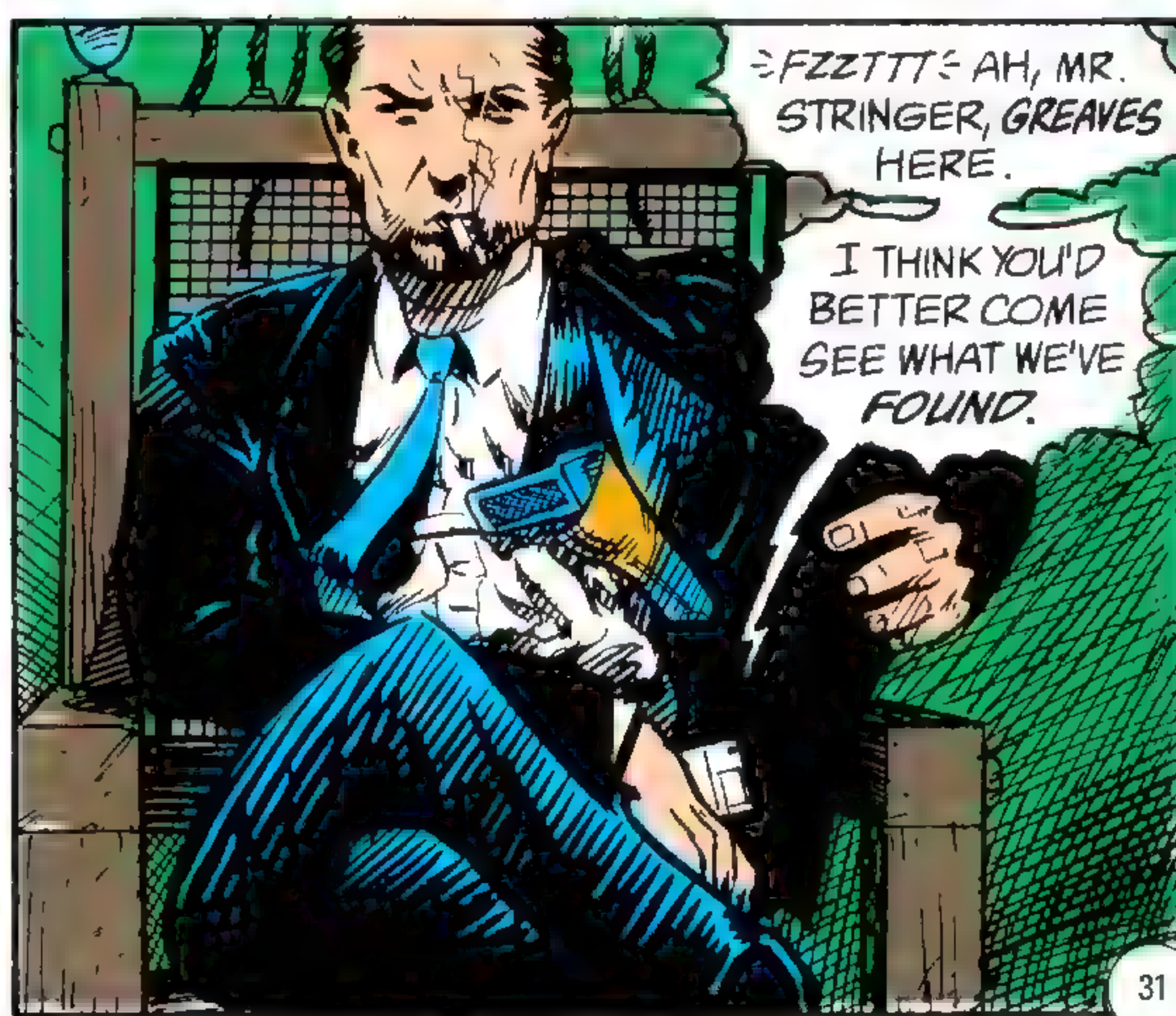
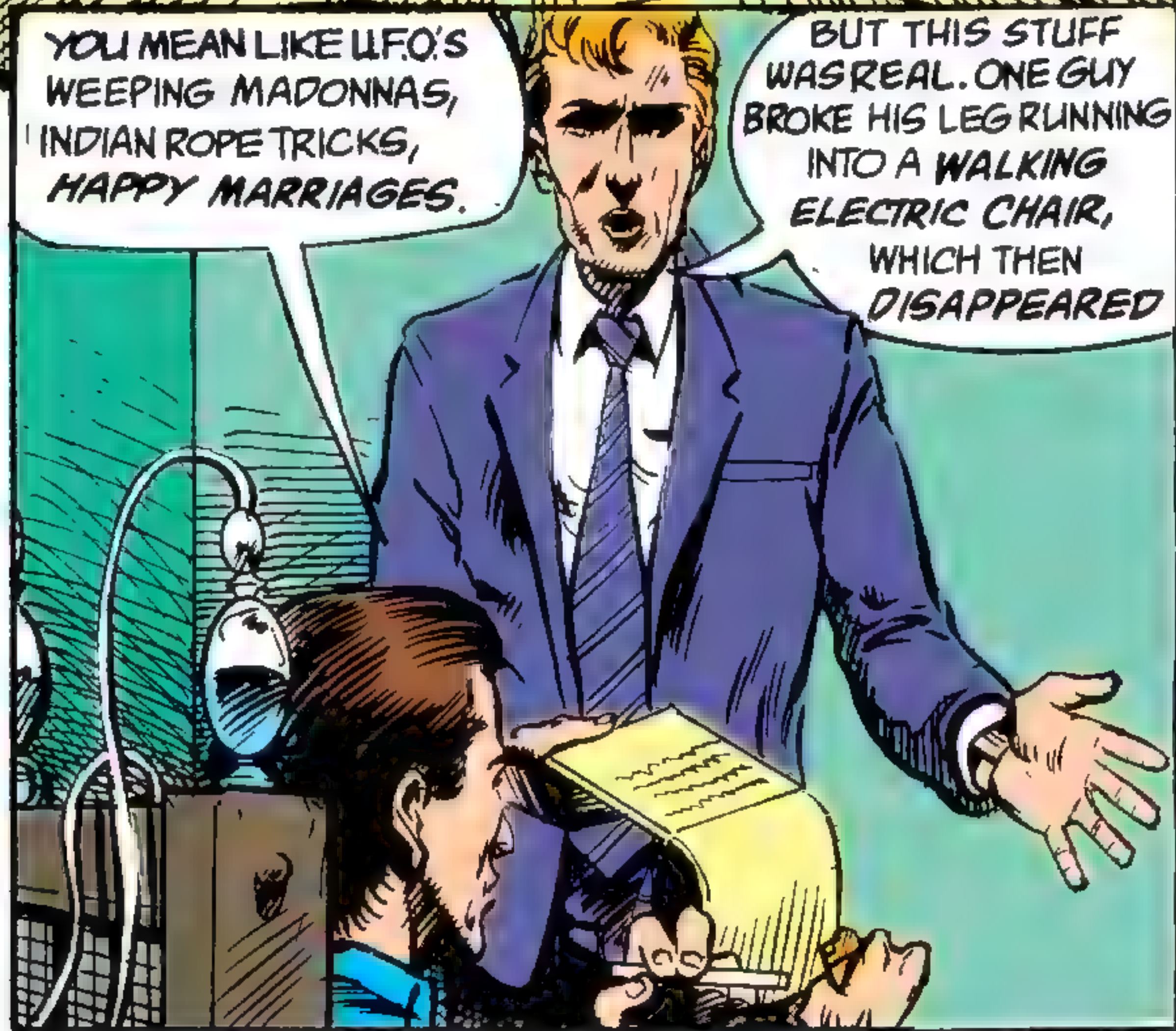
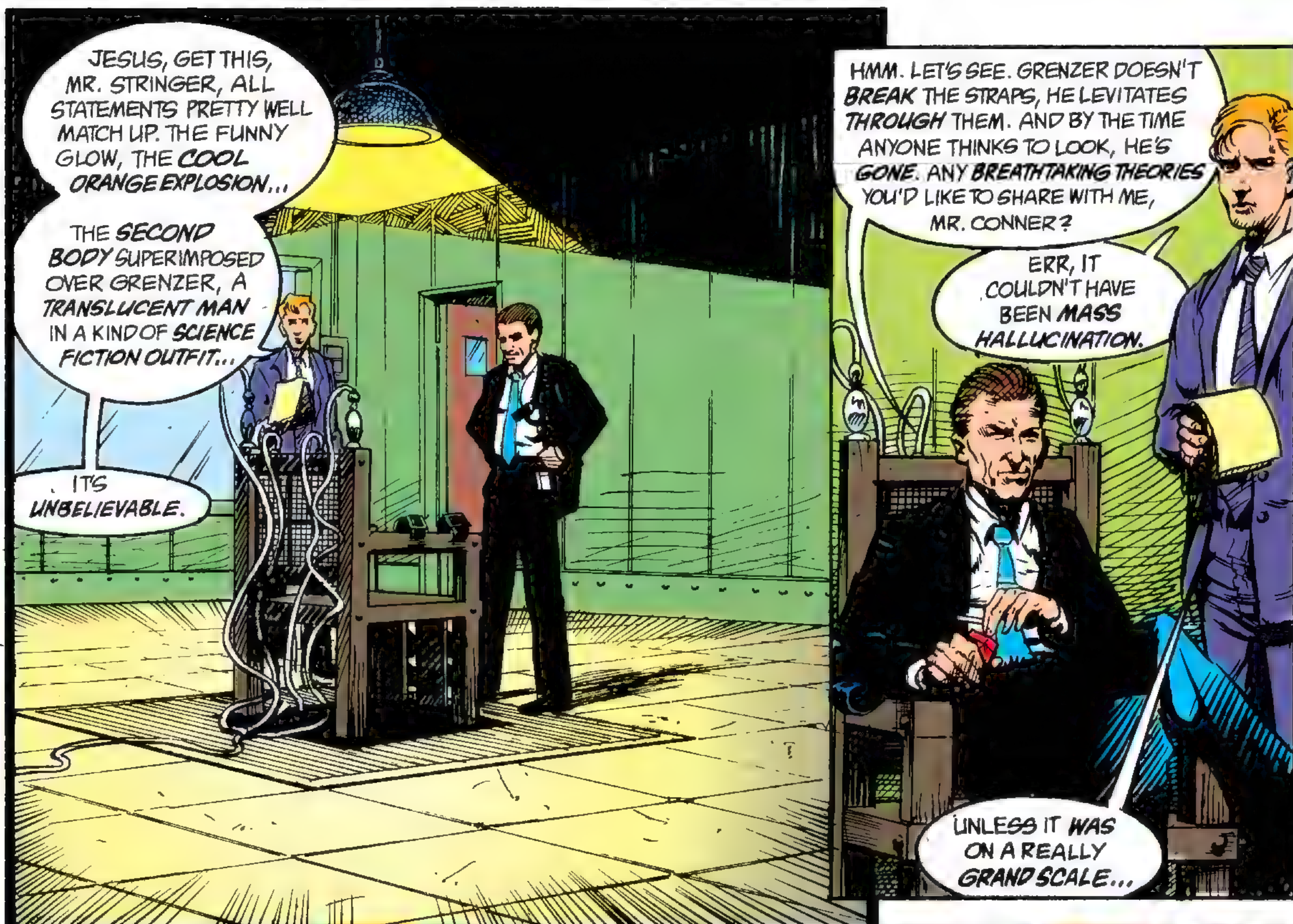
TODAY WAS ALSO THE SCHEDULED DAY OF EXECUTION OF MULTIPLE KILLER TROY GRENZER.

AUTHORITIES REFUSE TO SAY WHETHER TODAY'S EXPLOSION PREVENTED THE EXECUTION...



...BUT DENY THAT THE TWO ARE IN ANY WAY CONNECTED...

HELLO? IS THIS THE POLICE? THIS IS THE REGAL MOTEL...





SOME HIGHWAY BOYS PICKED HIM UP WEST OF HERE. WE SCARED THE SHIT OUT OF THEM. THEY'LL KEEP THEIR MOUTHS SHUT.

IS HE DEAD?

IS HE *HUMAN*, FOR CHRISAKES?



SEEMS DEAD. SEEMS HUMAN ENOUGH, TOO. BUT... WELL, HE'S JUST A BIT LIGHT, YOU KNOW? LIKE HE HAD COTTON CANDY FOR GUTS. TOUCH HIM.



JESUS HE'S *SOFT*. LIKE PUTTY.

AND MY FINGERS. THEY'RE *TINGLING*.



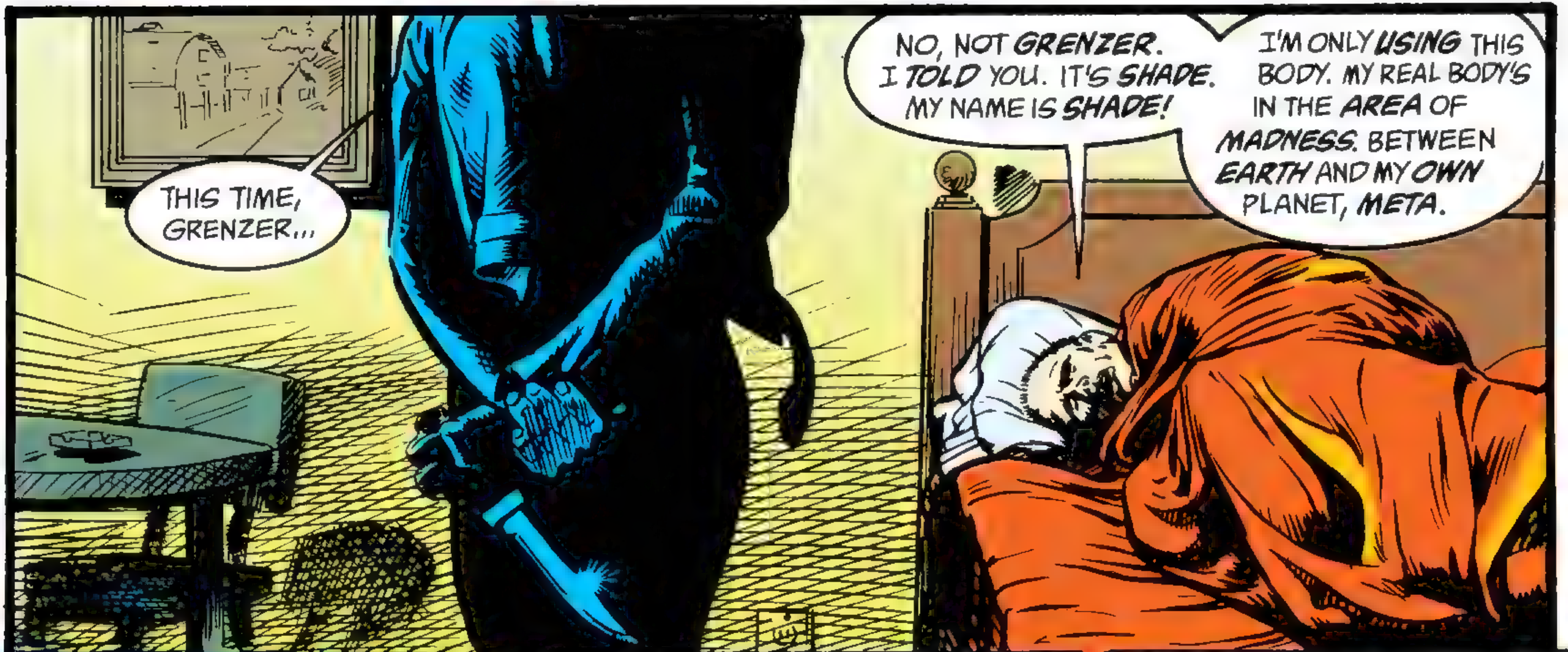
YOUR *OPINION*, MR. GREAVES?

CHRIST KNOWS. MAYBE THE WHOLE WORLD'S JUST GONE *CRAZY*.



BEST THEORY I'VE HEARD ALL DAY.

MR. STRINGER, SIR... GETTING SOMETHING ABOUT ANOTHER *EXPLOSION*. SOMETHING ABOUT *FARMHOUSE*... FARMHOUSE MENTAL HOSPITAL...



THIS TIME,
GRENZER...

NO, NOT GRENZER.
I TOLD YOU. IT'S SHADE.
MY NAME IS SHADE!

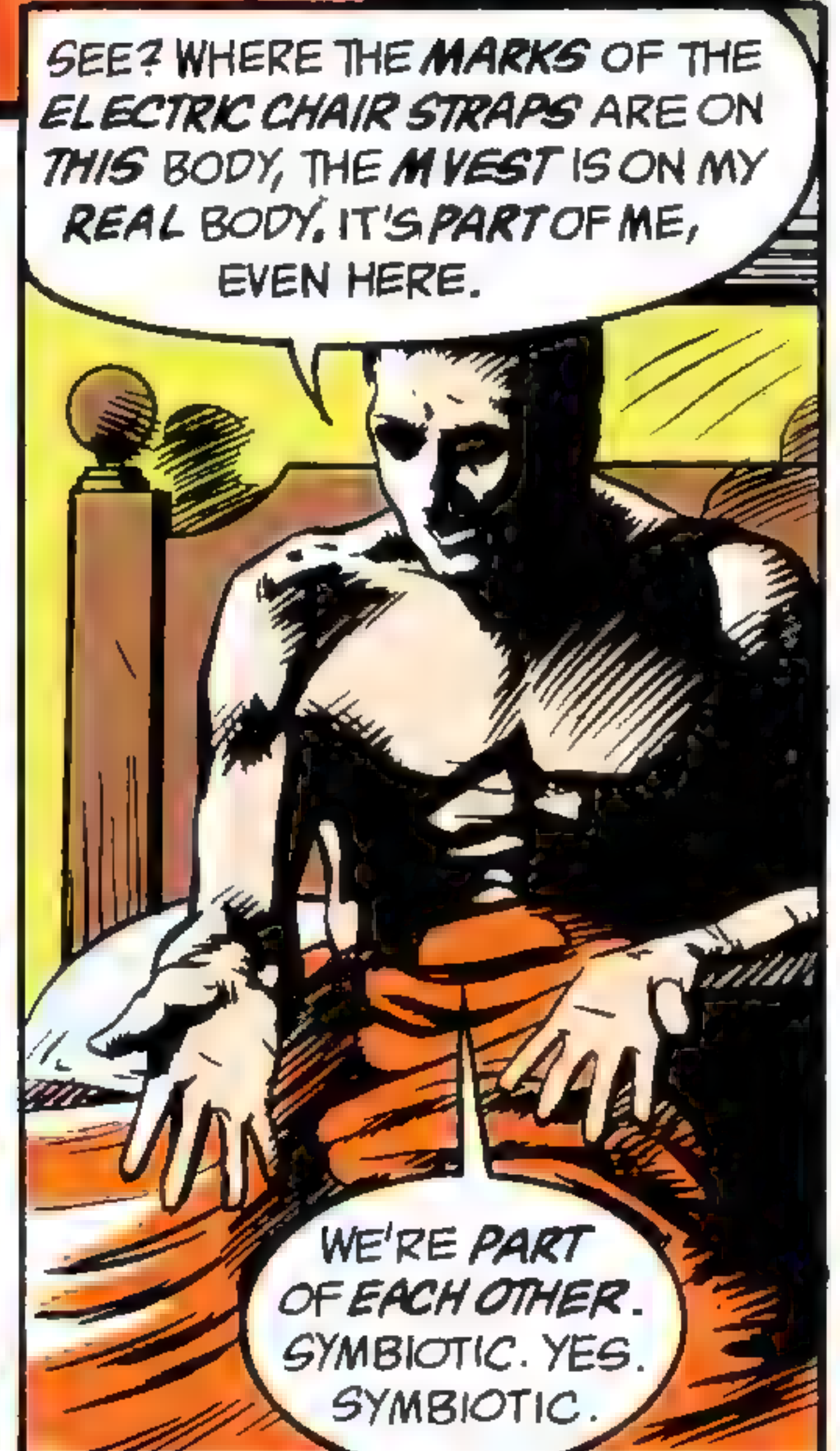
I'M ONLY USING THIS
BODY. MY REAL BODY'S
IN THE AREA OF
MADNESS. BETWEEN
EARTH AND MY OWN
PLANET, META.



META...

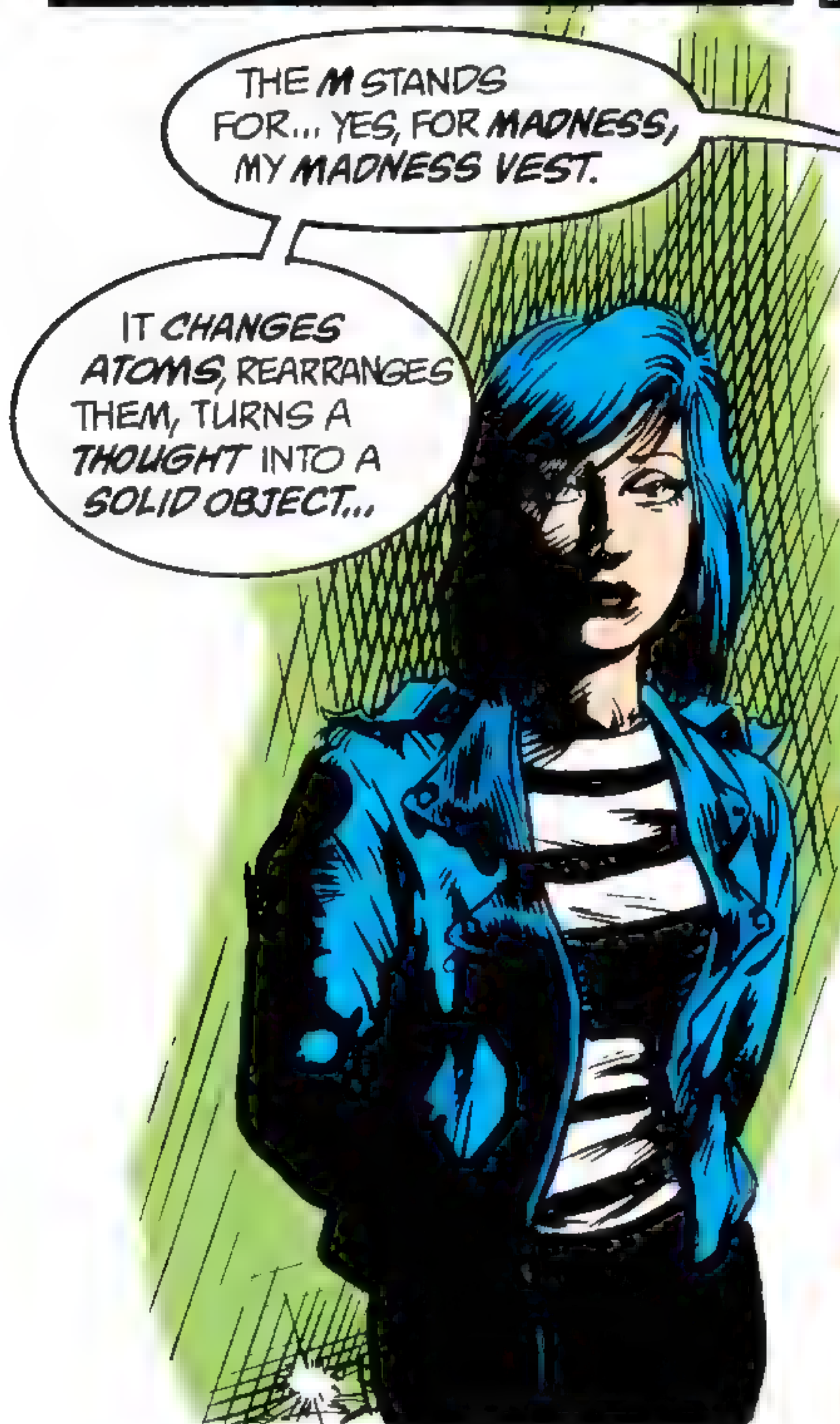


IT'LL ALL COME BACK. THE *M* VEST.
THAT'S IN THE AREA TOO, BUT BECAUSE
IT'S PART OF MY SOULFORCE, NOW, IT'S
WITH ME ON EARTH.



SEE? WHERE THE MARKS OF THE
ELECTRIC CHAIR STRAPS ARE ON
THIS BODY, THE *M* VEST IS ON MY
REAL BODY. IT'S PART OF ME,
EVEN HERE.

WE'RE PART
OF EACH OTHER.
SYMBIOTIC. YES.
SYMBIOTIC.



THE *M* STANDS
FOR... YES, FOR MADNESS,
MY MADNESS VEST.

IT CHANGES
ATOMS, REARRANGES
THEM, TURNS A
THOUGHT INTO A
SOLID OBJECT...



REMEMBER THAT
MAN YOU HIT WITH YOUR
CAR? ONE OF MINE. EVEN
MY SUBCONSCIOUS CAN
HARNESS THE POWER
OF THE *M* VEST.

IT'LL ALL COME
BACK. THE VEST CONTAINS
ALL THE ANSWERS. I
HAVE TO LEARN TO
CONTACT IT. HAVE TO
LEARN TO CONTROL
IT.



ENTERING GRENZER'S BODY SCRAMBLED MY MIND, BUT I'M STARTING TO REMEMBER. I'VE COME HERE TO FIGHT SOMETHING.

SOMETHING THAT'S COME FROM THE AREA OF MADNESS TOO. MAYBE MADNESS ITSELF.

I'LL USE MY M VEST TO FIGHT IT. FIGHT MADNESS WITH MADNESS.



THIS TIME, GRENZER.

I TOLD YOU, I'M NOT GRENZER.

I KILLED GRENZER WHEN I ENTERED HIM. THAT'S WHY I CHOSE HIM. HE WAS GOING TO DIE ANYHOW.



THOUGH I THINK SOME RESIDUE OF HIS PERSONALITY MAY HAVE SURVIVED. IT'S VERY STRANGE, LIKE AN ECHO OF SOMEONE ELSE, BUBBLING BENEATH YOU...

I KEEP HEARING A PHRASE. COLD PEANUT BUTTER. DOES THAT MEAN ANYTHING TO--



THIS TIME, GRENZER.



NO, I'M TOO WEAK TO FIGHT. I'M SHADE. I'M FROM A PLANET CALLED META. I'M NOT GRENZER.

JUST THINK. THINK.

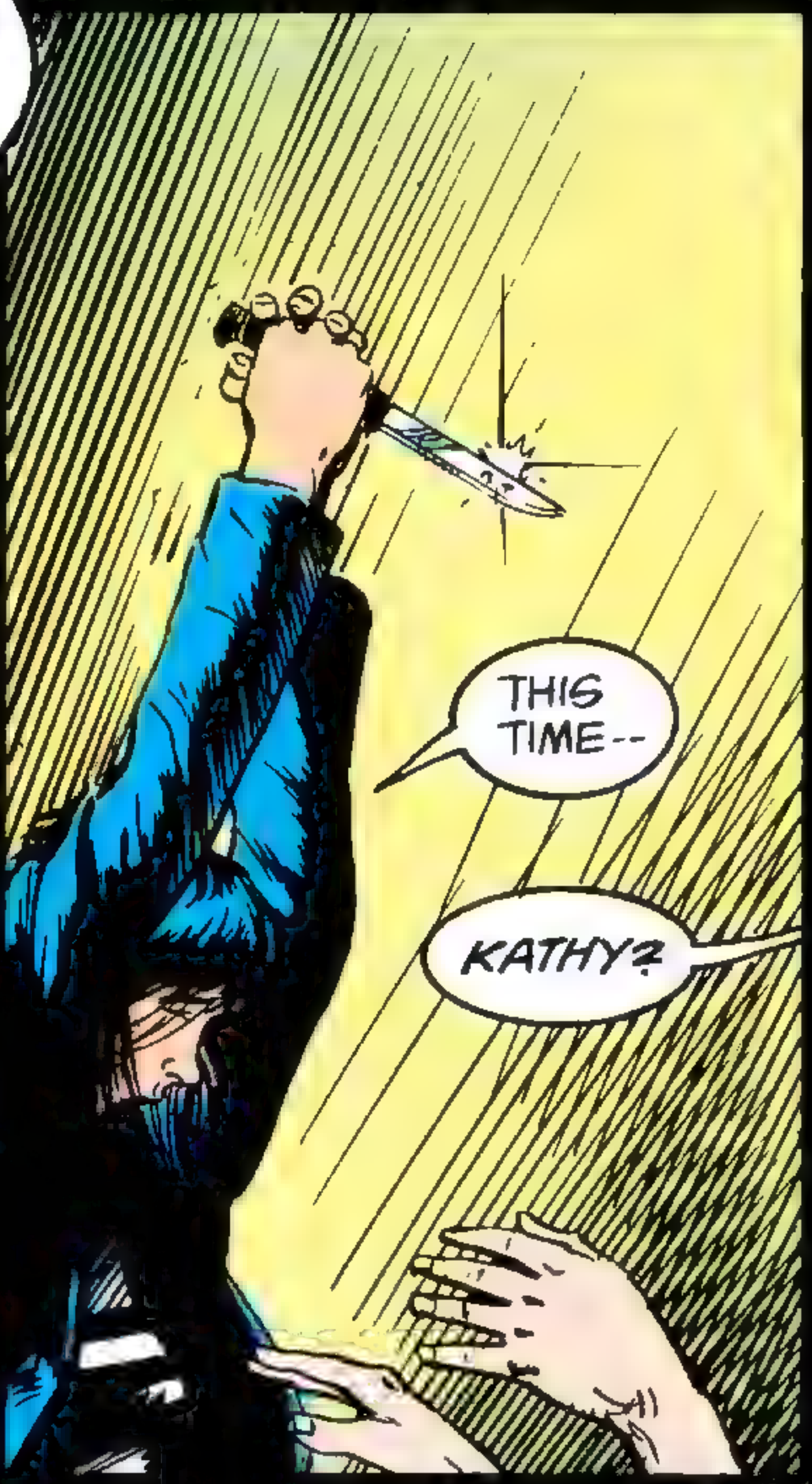


HOW COULD GRENZER HAVE ESCAPED? HOW COULD HE HAVE CREATED THAT EXPLOSION?

THE STRANGE PEOPLE OUTSIDE. ALL THE EFFECTS OF THE MADNESS VEST...

THAT'S ME.
THAT'S MY
CRAZINESS.
THEY SAID I
WAS CRAZY.

ALL I KNOW IS
YOU'RE HERE. A SECOND
CHANCE. I DIDN'T HELP
MOM AND DAD FIRST
TIME ROUND...



THIS
TIME--

KATHY?



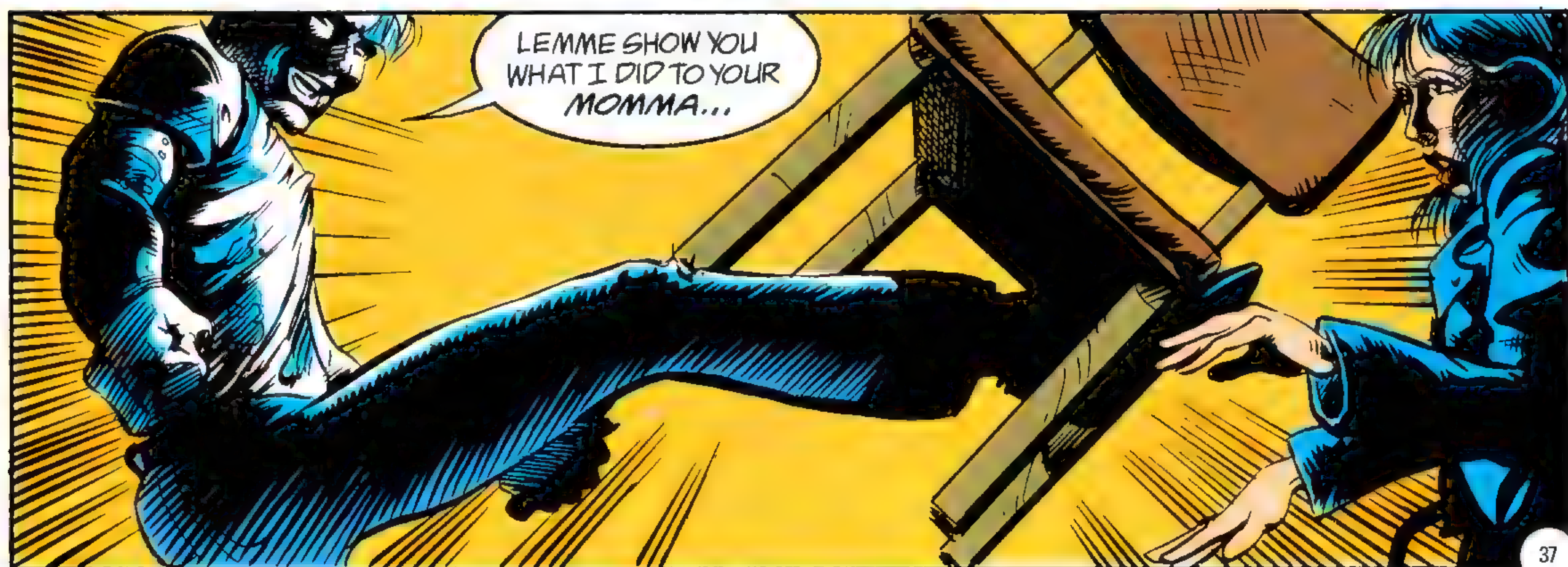
oh...

WHAT ARE
YOU DOING,
KATHY?

mom...
oh god... mom...
dad...







I AM THE VEST. THE VEST IS ME.
WE'RE PART OF EACH OTHER

CONCENTRATE.
MAKE CONTACT.

USE YOUR
IMAGINATION...

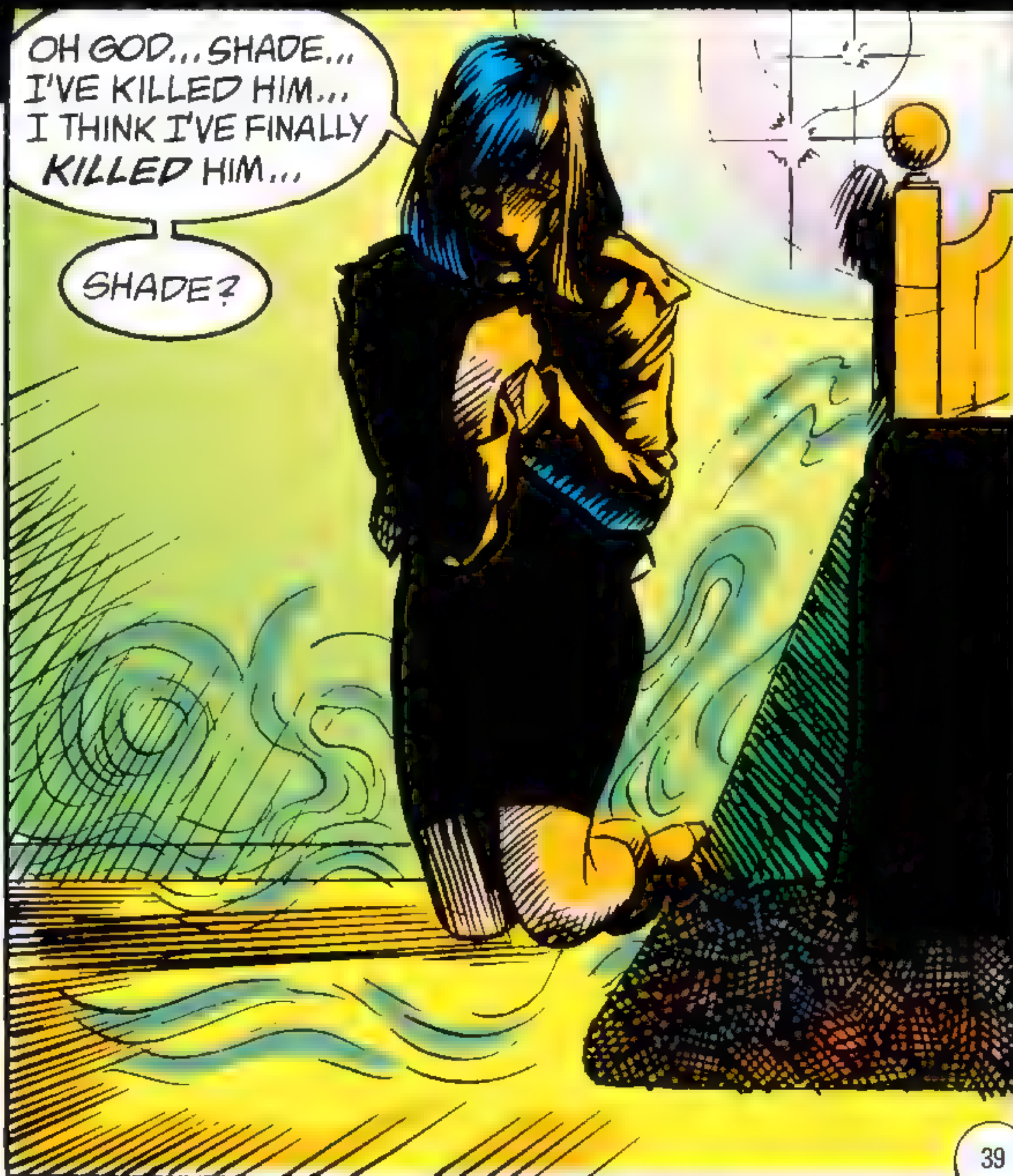
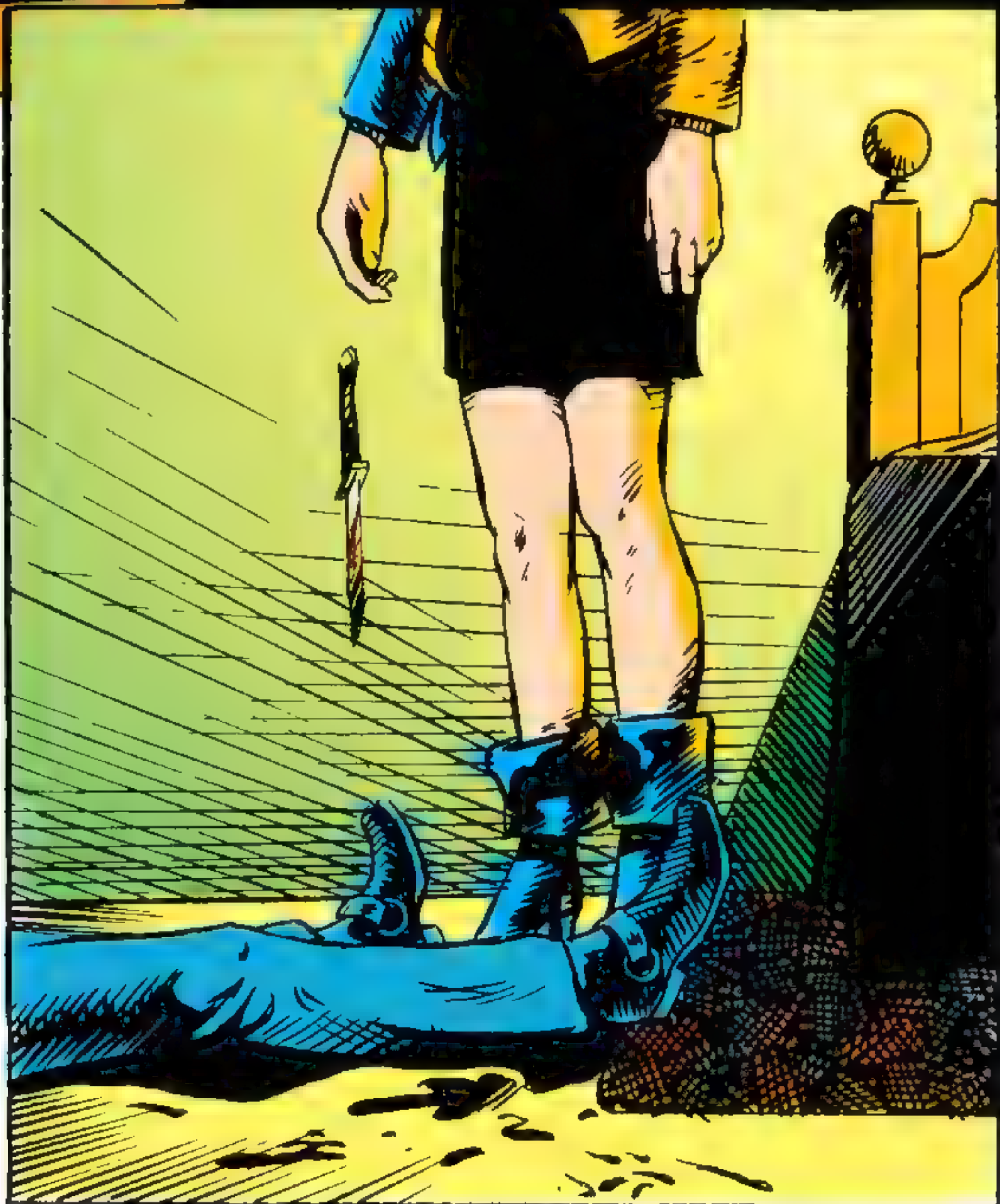
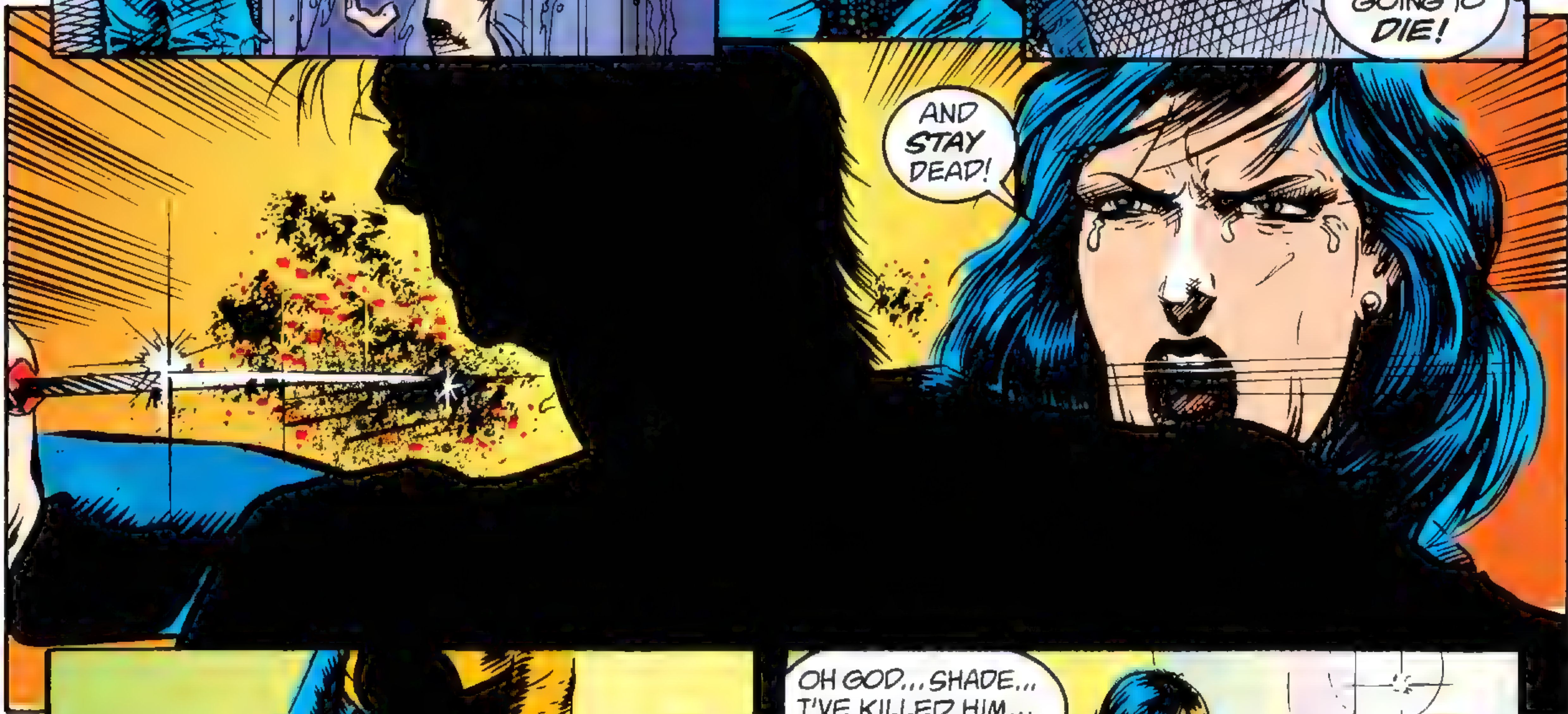
OH
JESUS
HELP
ME...

HE AIN'T GONNA HELP YOU. DIDN'T
HELP YOUR MOM OR PA NONE,
DID HE?

MAYBE
HE DON'T LIKE
YOU FOR WHAT
YOU DID WITH
THAT BLACK
BOY...

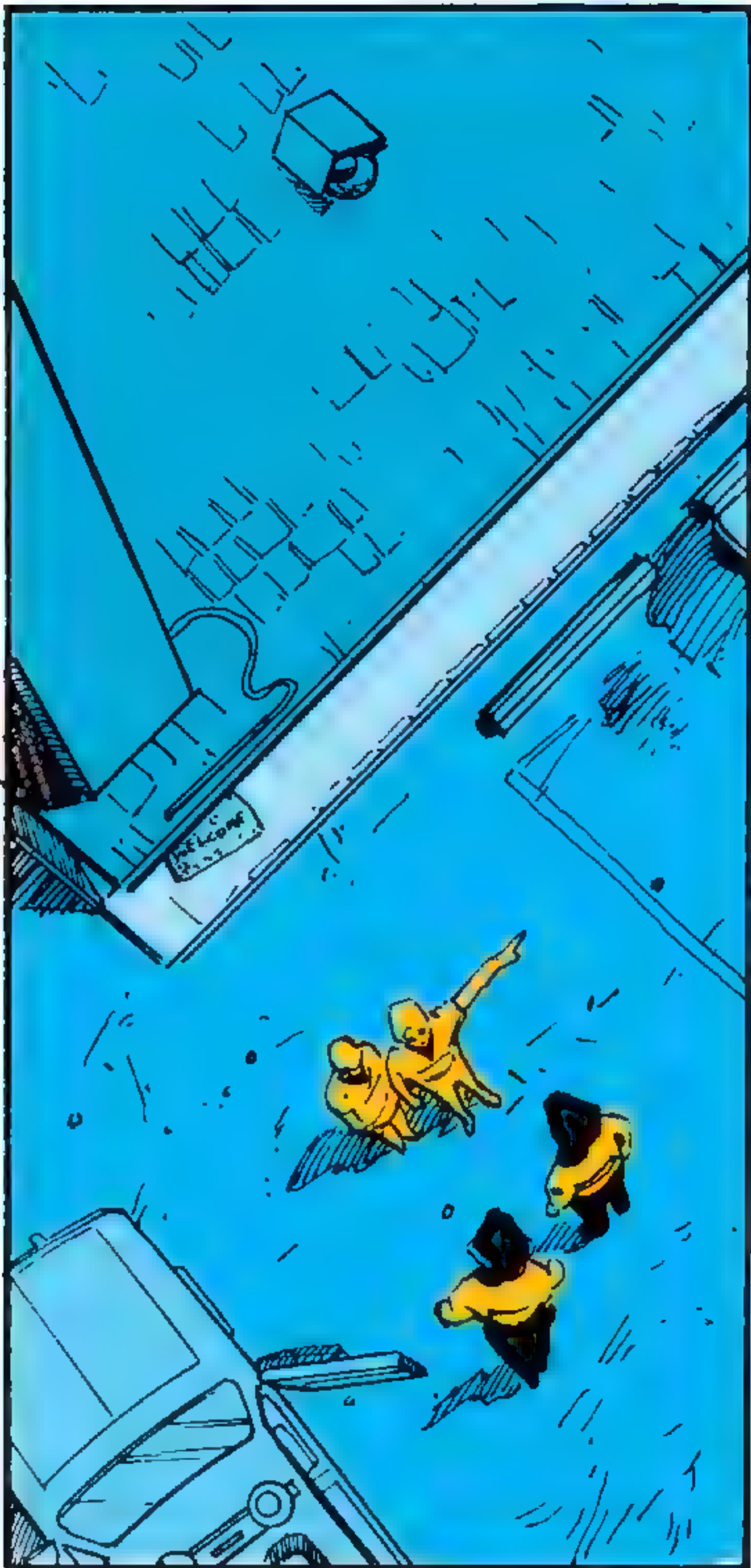
GO TO HELL YOU
BASTARD YOU BASTARD
I'M GONNA KILL
YOU --

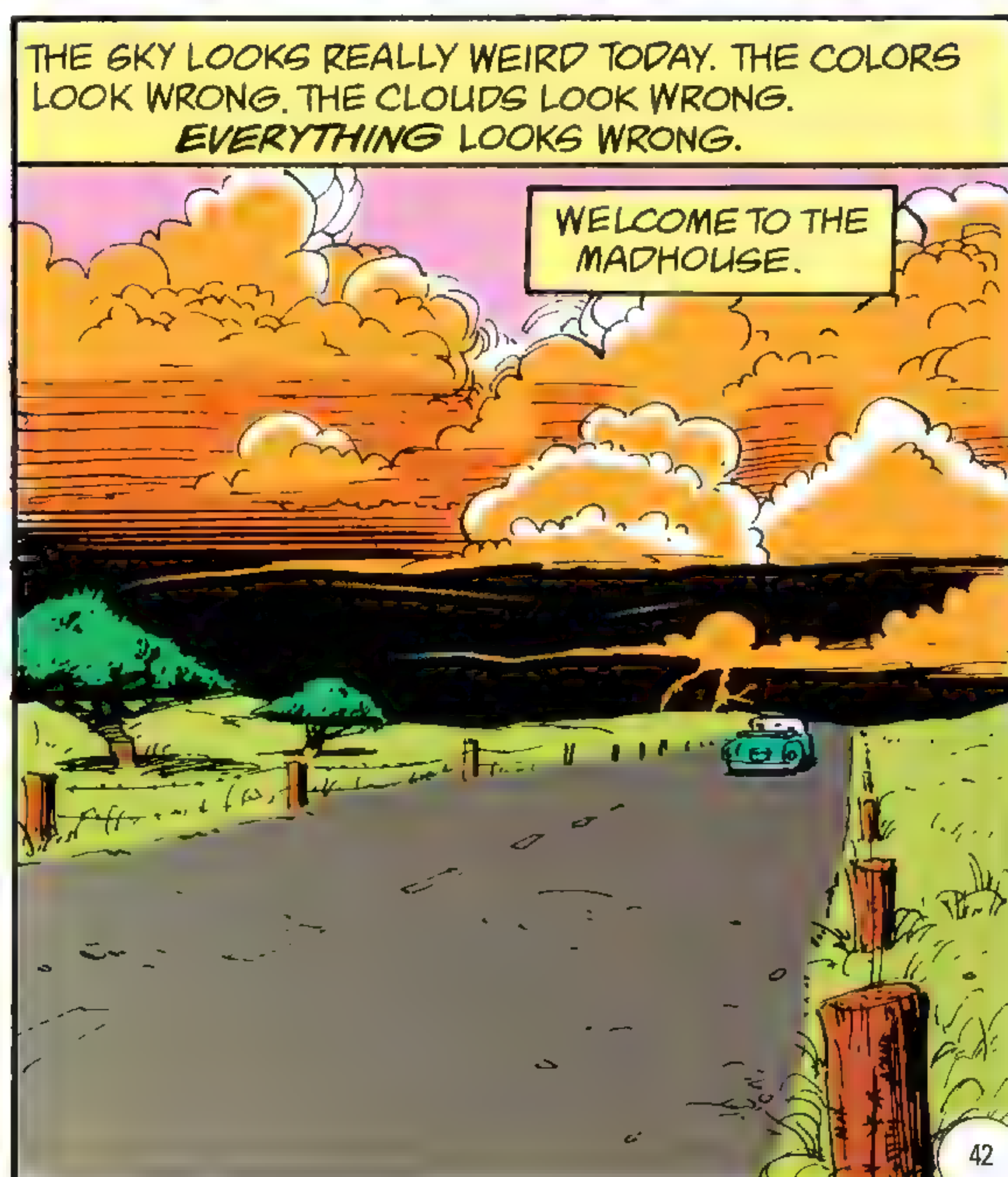
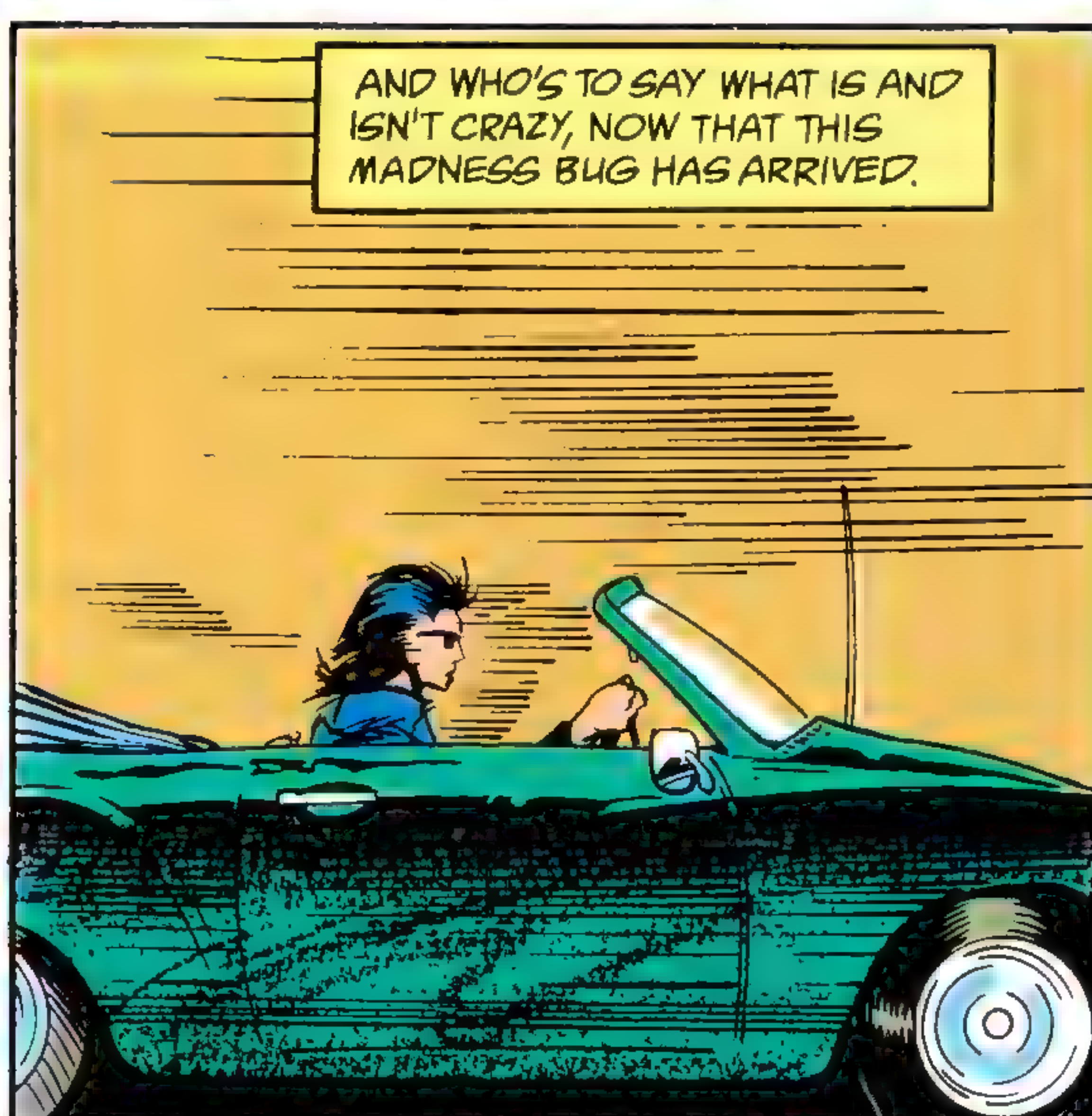
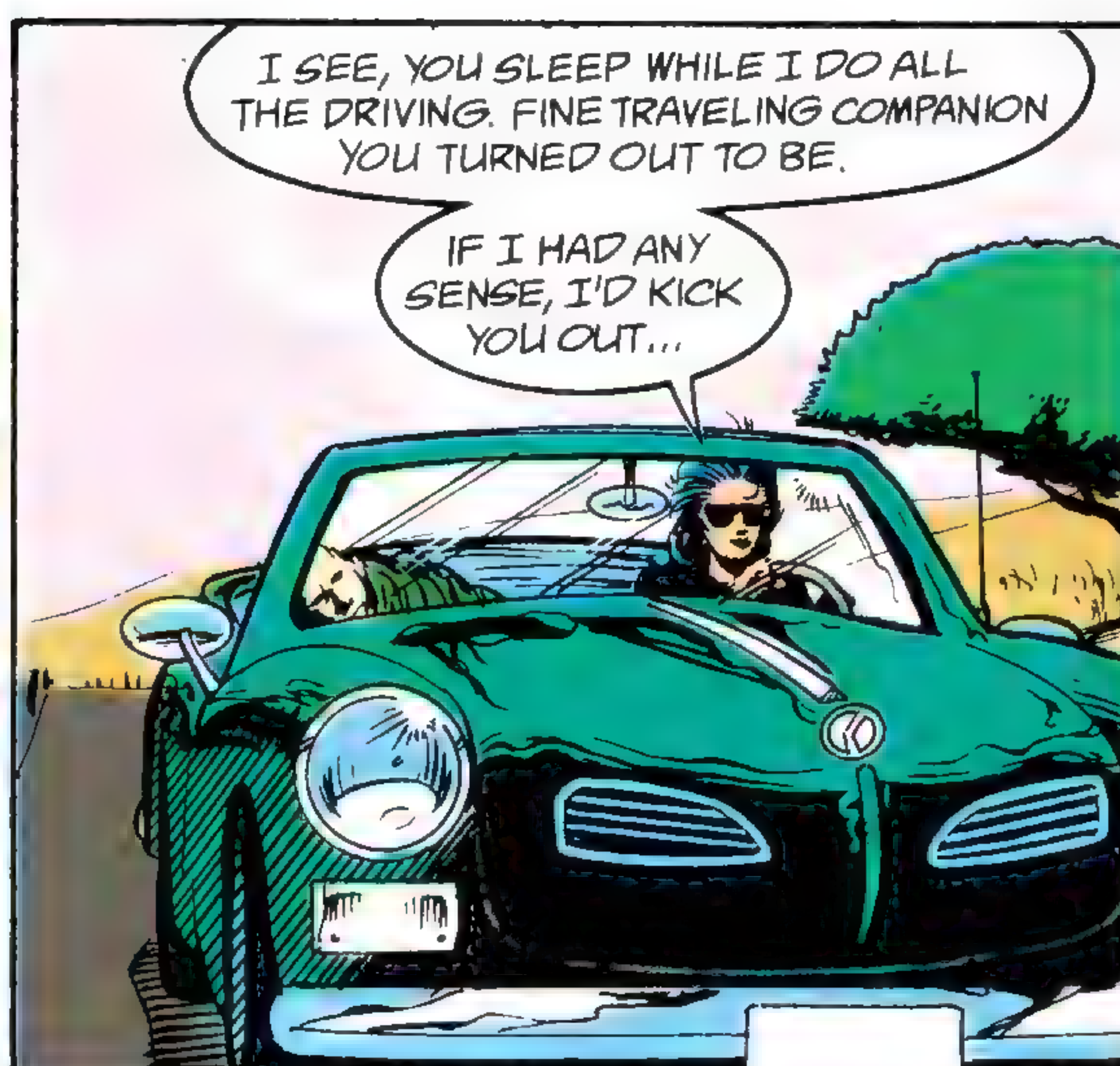
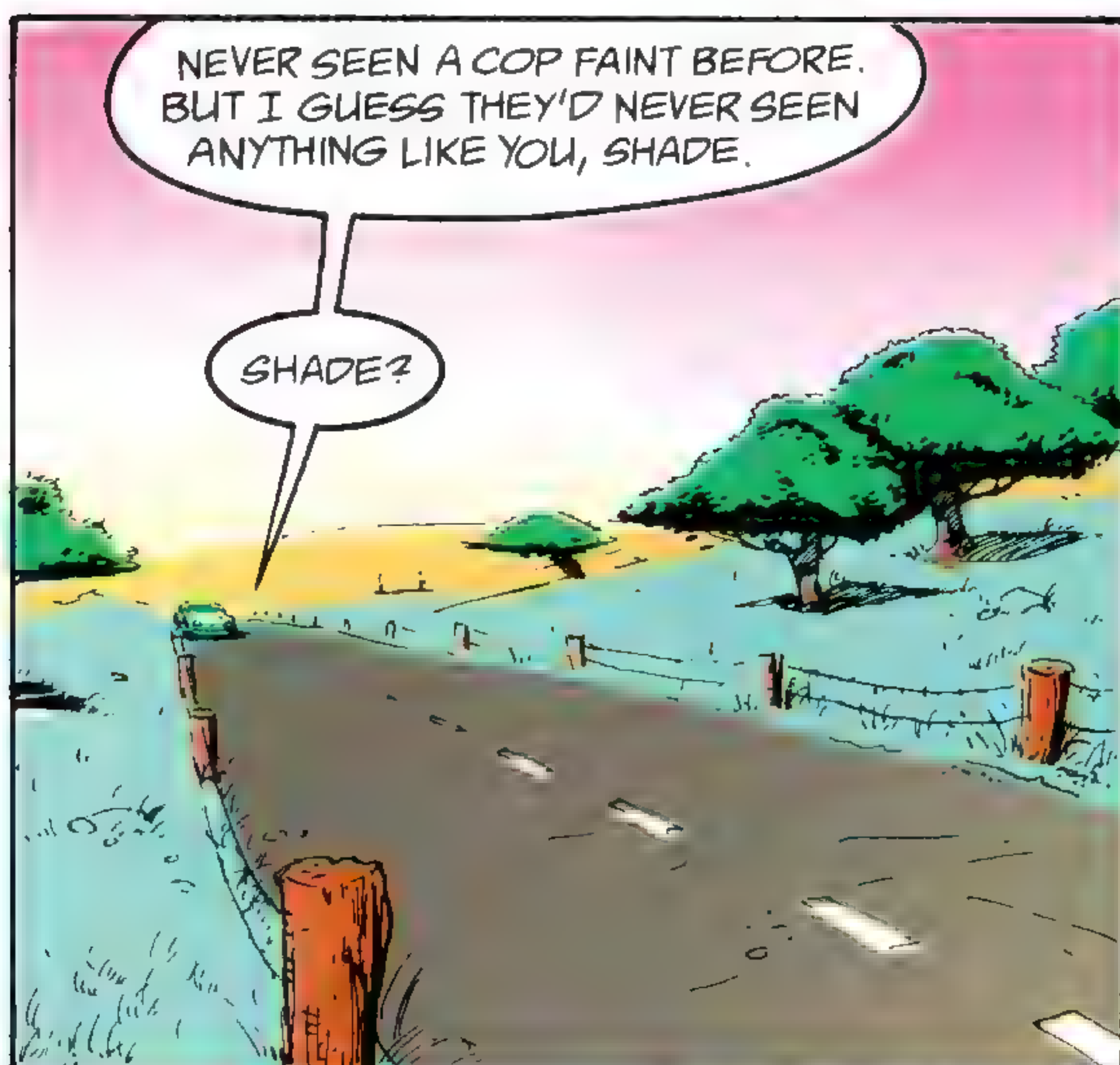
NO!






MY
GOD...







mcCarthyism



THERE IS A HOLE
IN THE BACK OF
THE PRESIDENT'S
HEAD.

THE BASTARDS THAT STILL RUN
THIS COUNTRY MESSED AROUND
WITH IT. THEY PATCHED HIM UP
AND THEY DUG NEW HOLES IN HIM
AND THEY MADE THE HOLES IN
HIS HEAD FIT THEIR STORY, BUT
DON'T BELIEVE THEM.

ABRAHAM ZAPRUDER SHOT A FILM
OF THE ASSASSINATION. KENNEDY
WAS KNOCKED FORWARD AND THEN
HE LURCHED BACK. CROSSFIRE...

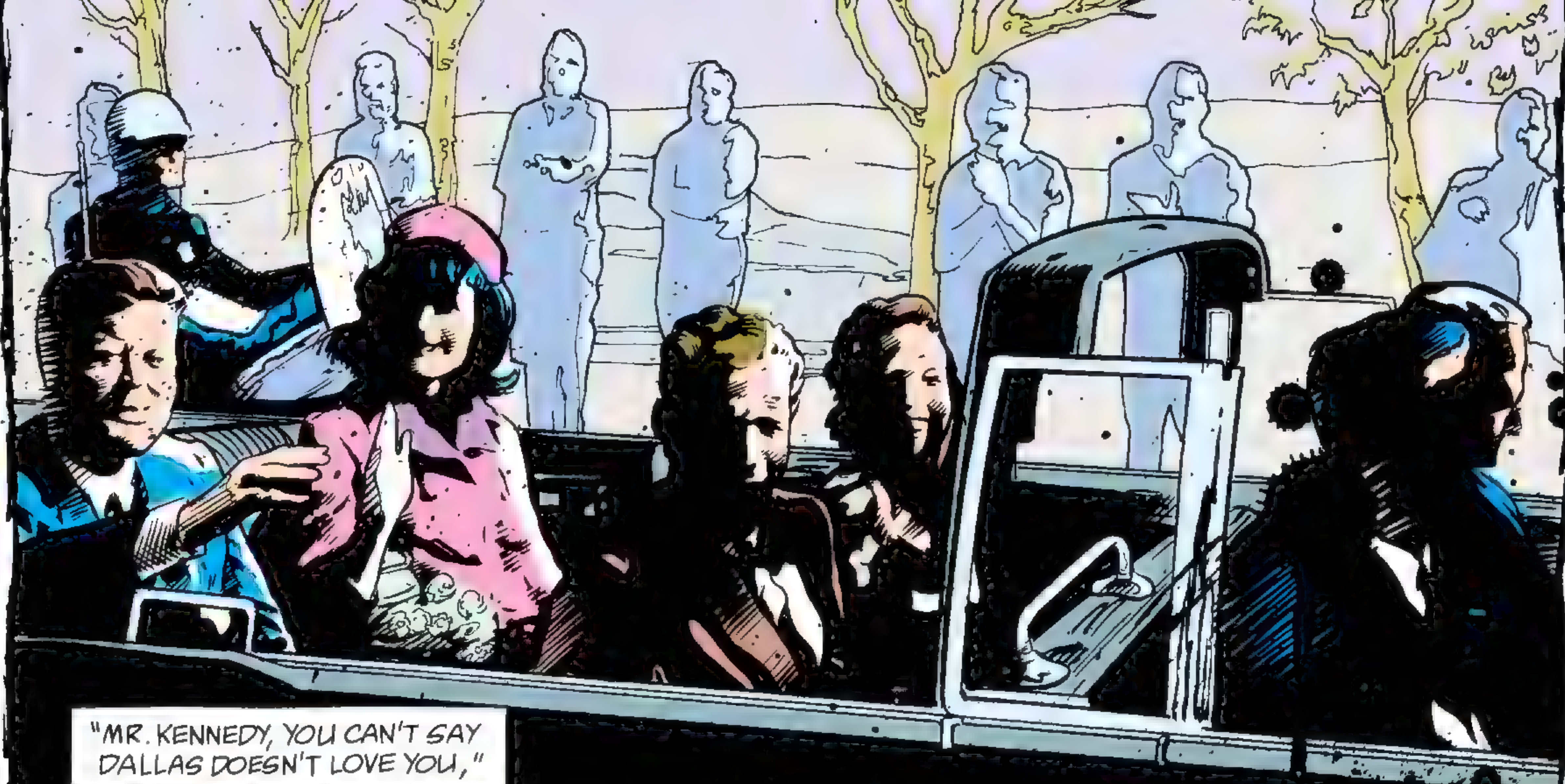
SEE FOR YOURSELF. THE
FATAL BULLET HIT HIM FROM
THE FRONT. THE LARGE EXIT
WOUND IS ON THE BACK...

LOOK...

THE PARIETAL BONE PROTRUDES THROUGH
THE SCALP, SOME OF THE SKULL'S OCCIPITAL
IS FRACTURED IN ITS LATERAL HALF. THE
BACK OF THE HEAD HAS OPENED UP LIKE
A WATERLILY.

who shot JFK?

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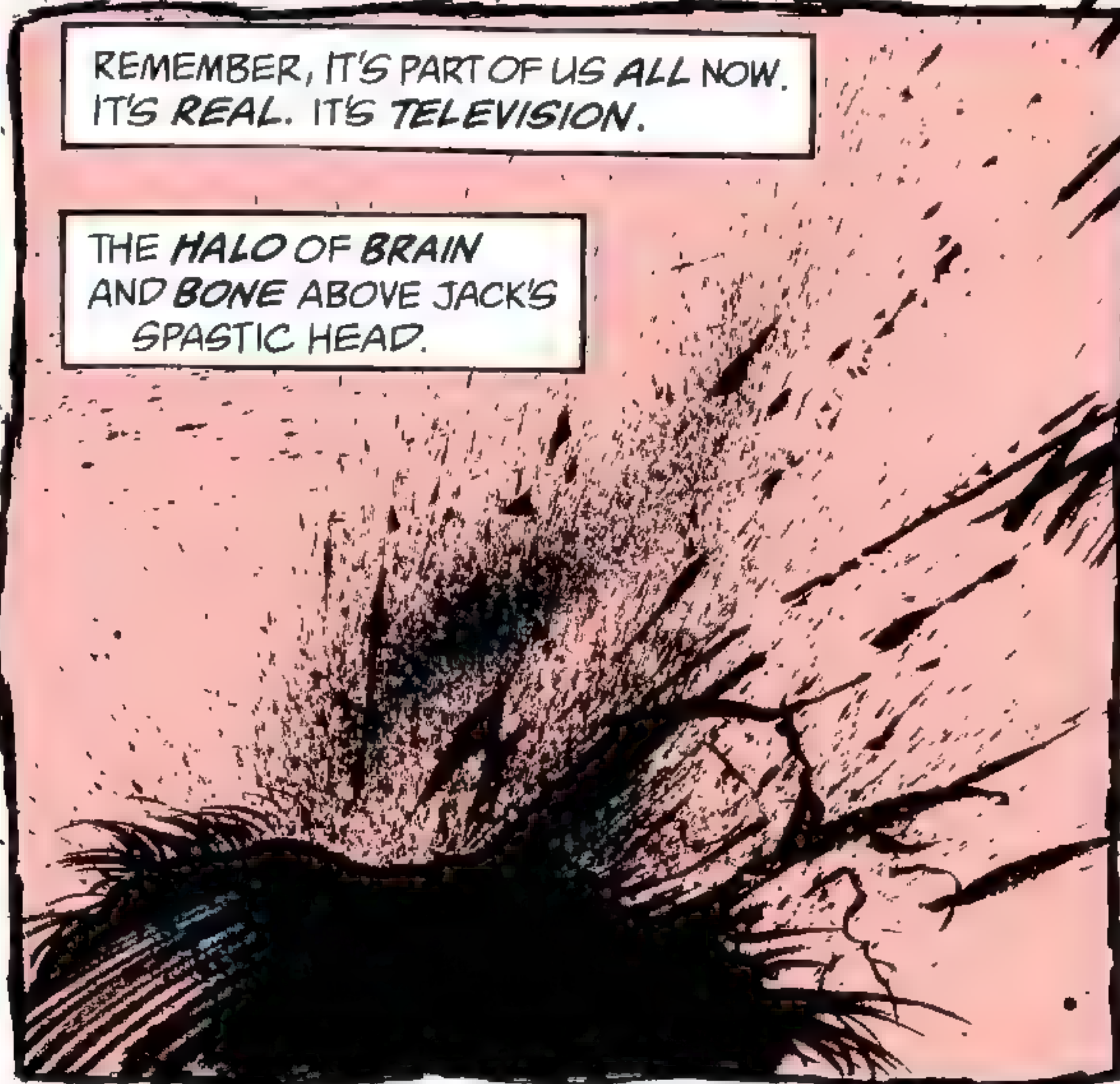


"MR. KENNEDY, YOU CAN'T SAY DALLAS DOESN'T LOVE YOU,"

SAID GOVERNOR CONNALLY'S WIFE, AS THE OPEN LIMOUSINE MOVED TOWARDS DEALEY PLAZA, PASSED THE TEXAS SCHOOL BOOK DEPOSITORY, BENEATH THE SNIPER'S PERCH ON THE SIXTH FLOOR...

REMEMBER, IT'S PART OF US ALL NOW. IT'S REAL. IT'S TELEVISION.

THE HALO OF BRAIN AND BONE ABOVE JACK'S SPASTIC HEAD.



THERE'S A HOLE IN THE BACK OF THE PRESIDENT'S HEAD, THROUGH WHICH THE HEART AND SOUL OF AMERICA HAS SLOWLY TRICKLED FOR NEARLY THIRTY YEARS.



AND IT'S STILL TRICKLING.

HE WAS KENNEDY, FIRST PRESIDENT TO BE BORN THIS CENTURY. JOHN FITZGERALD KENNEDY.



STILL OOZING OUT ITS CLOTS OF SLIMY HOPE AND INNOCENCE. HE WAS THE GREAT AMERICAN MARTYR. WITNESS TO THE NEW AGE.



HE HAD TO BE KILLED, DON'T YOU SEE?

HE *HAD* TO BE ASSASSINATED,
HAD TO BE DEAD BEFORE HE
COULD BE A *SYMBOL*.

ALIVE HE WAS TOO
HUMAN TO BE A *SYMBOL*,
OR AT LEAST TO REMAIN
A *SYMBOL*.

KENNEDY



KENNEDY FOR
PRESIDENT

FIASCO AT THE BAY
OF PIGS, VIETNAM, SCREWING
THAT *MOB BOSS'S* LADY IN
THE *WHITE HOUSE*.

HAND UP
MARILYN MONROE'S
SKIRT. HOW *COULD*
YOU?

YOU SAYING *YOU* WOULDN'T DO THAT
IF YOU HAD THE *CHANCE*? WITH
MARILYN?

ANYWAY, YOU CAN'T
BE PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES *AND*
INNOCENT.
CONTRADICTION
IN TERMS.

THAT'S NOT
THE POINT, JACK.
NOT THE POINT *AT ALL*.
SYMBOLS OF HOPE
AND FREEDOM AND
CHANGE JUST DON'T
DO THAT SORT OF
THING.

SYMBOLS SHOULD *STAND* FOR
SOMETHING, THEN BEFORE THEY
FALL OVER THEY SHOULD BUTT
OUT, LEAVE AN *EMPTY SPACE*...

...THAT *WE* CAN FILL
WITH THE MESSY
SHAMBLES OF
OUR DREAMS.

YOUR *TEETH* WILL ALWAYS BE
PERFECT AND WHITE, YOUR *YOUNG*
WIFE WILL ALWAYS BE PERFECT AND
BEAUTIFUL (WE DON'T WANT TO
THINK ABOUT HER AND THAT *GREEK*
SLIMEBALL, THAT'S *ANOTHER* WOMAN).

YOUR *EYES* WILL ALWAYS BE
SQUINTING OUT FROM YOUR
HANDSOME FACE, JACK...

SQUINTING TOWARDS A PLACE WHERE ONLY *YOU* CAN LEAD US.

WHO ARE YOU ANYHOW, MISTER?

DUANE TRILBY, MISTER PRESIDENT. I'M GONNA WRITE THE DEFINITIVE ASSASSINATION BOOK, "**WHO KILLED JOHN F. KENNEDY?**"

IF THOSE BASTARD PUBLISHERS HAD GIVEN ME A BREAK I'D HAVE FINISHED IT YEARS AGO. MAYBE THE C.I.A. ARE LEANING ON THEM, TRYING TO BLOCK MY EXPOSÉ...

COME HERE, TRILBY. I WANT TO ASK YOU SOMETHING...

WHO KILLED ME? WHO KILLED J.F.K.?

WHAAAA...THAT'S COMPLICATED, JACK. ONE THING FOR SURE, IT WASN'T JUST **LEE HARVEY OSWALD**.

THEN IT WAS YOU, DUANE.

YOU KILLED ME.

NAHHHHH!

THE FLASH OF PHOTOGRAPHER'S BULBS AND TELEVISION LIGHTS, THEIR VOICES, HERE HE COMES, HERE HE COMES.

LEE, DID YOU KILL PRESIDENT KENNEDY?

NO! I DIDN'T KILL KENNEDY! I'M NOT OSWALD...

A FIGURE LEAPS FORWARD, BOOT-LEGGING A PISTOL, SEE EVERYTHING, OSWALD FLANKED BY THE PLAIN-CLOTHES MEN, BRUISE OVER ONE EYE.

JACK RUBY PULLING THE TRIGGER.

NAAHHHH!

OSWALD HAS BEEN SHOT.

LEE HARVEY OSWALD HAS BEEN

A SHOOTING HERE AT THE POLICE AND COURTS BUILDING



NAHHHHH!

OH GOD. DREAM. A DREAM.
ANOTHER DREAM.

KENNEDY. OSWALD. RUBY.
I'M GOING TO PIECES.
FALLING APART AT THE
GODDAMN SEAMS.



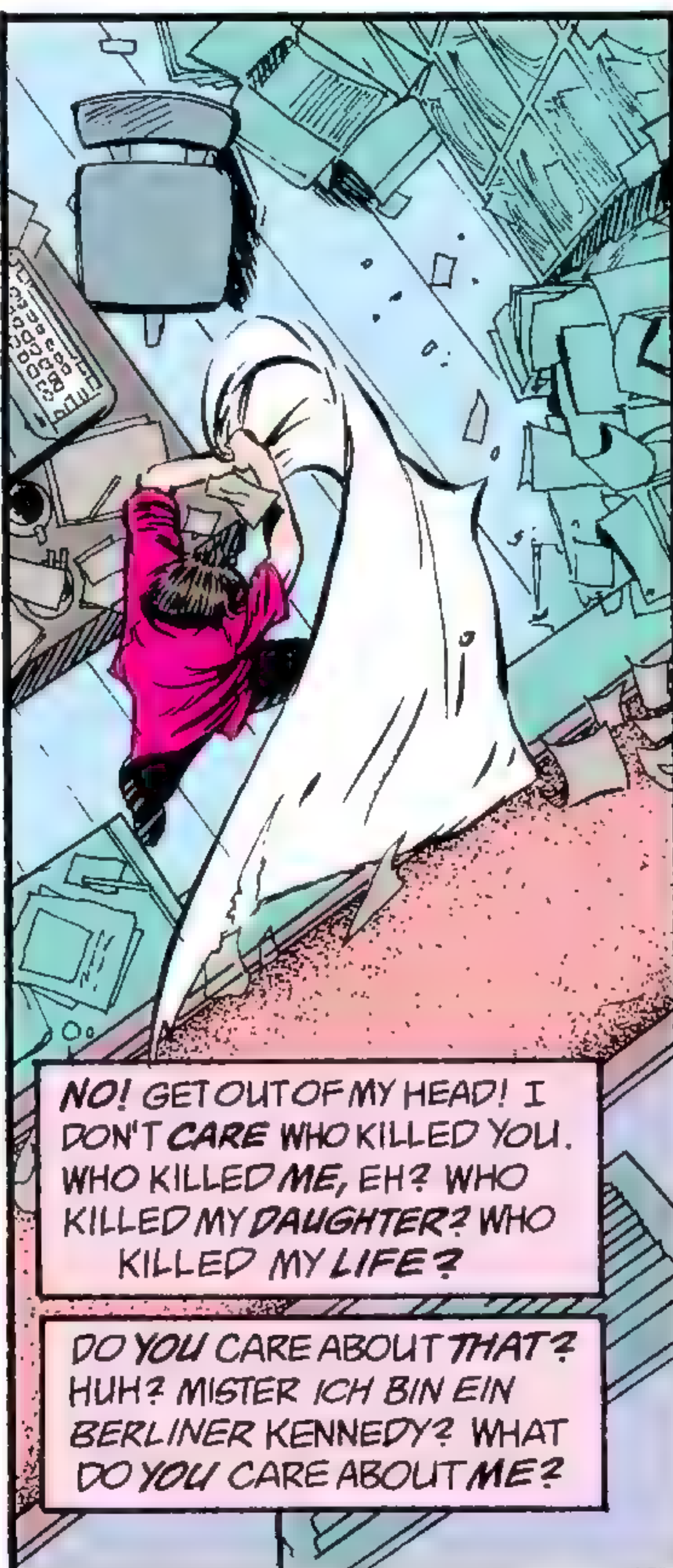
THINK... OSWALD
WASN'T OUT OF
BREATH WHEN THE
POLICEMAN SAW
HIM ON THE
SECOND FLOOR
OF THE BOOK
DEPOSITORY.

ONE AND A HALF MINUTES
AFTER THE SHOOTING. ONE
AND A HALF MINUTES TO
CLEAR UP AND GET FROM
THE SIXTH TO THE
SECOND FLOOR...

SHIT! FORGET IT FOR ONE MINUTE, CAN'T
YOU? GOTTA EAT. GET SOME LUNCH...



OSWALD SAID HE WAS GOING TO
LUNCH, JUST FIFTEEN MINUTES
BEFORE THE PRESIDENT...

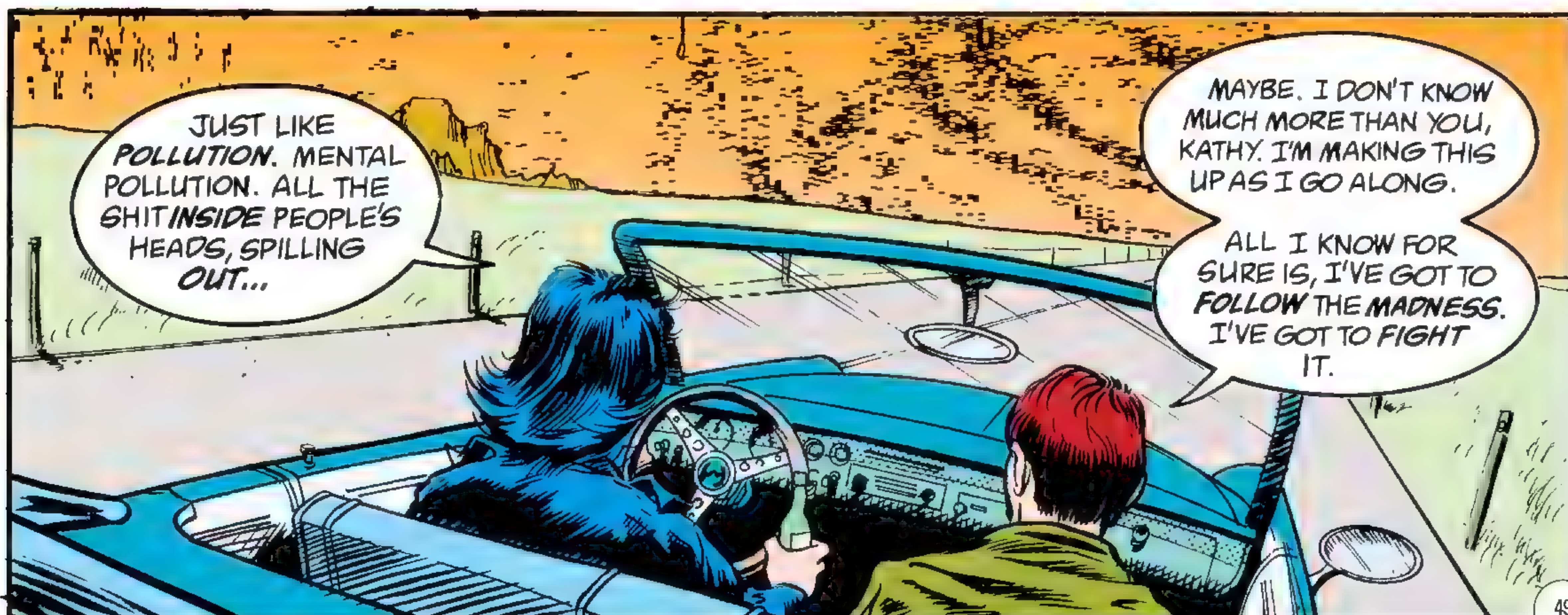
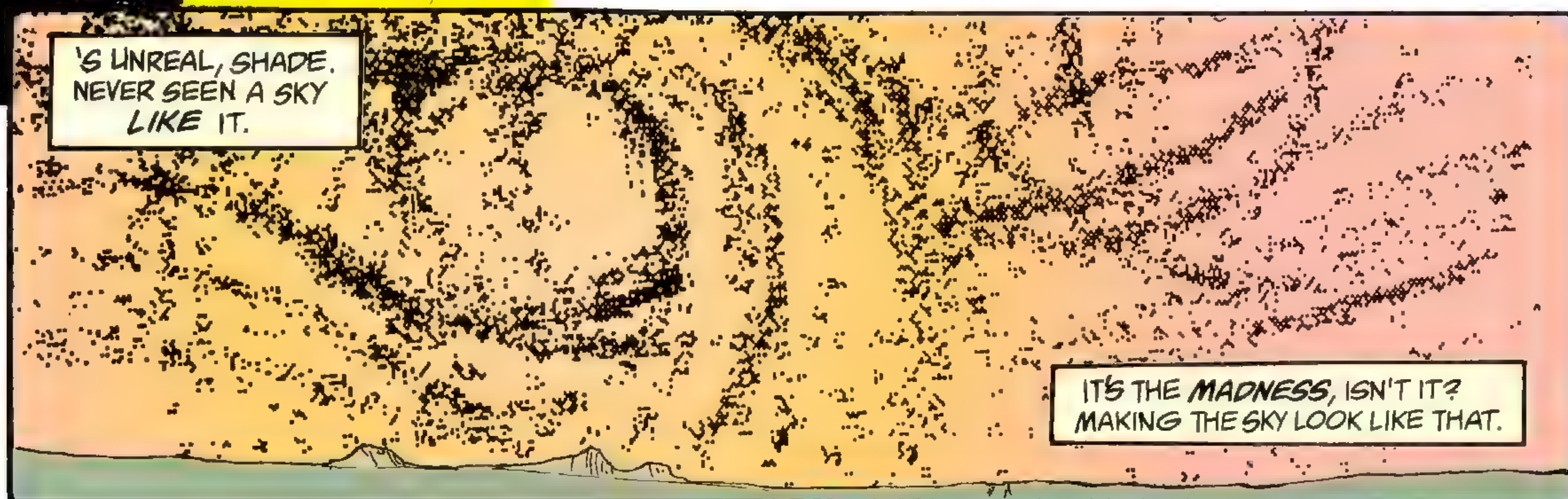
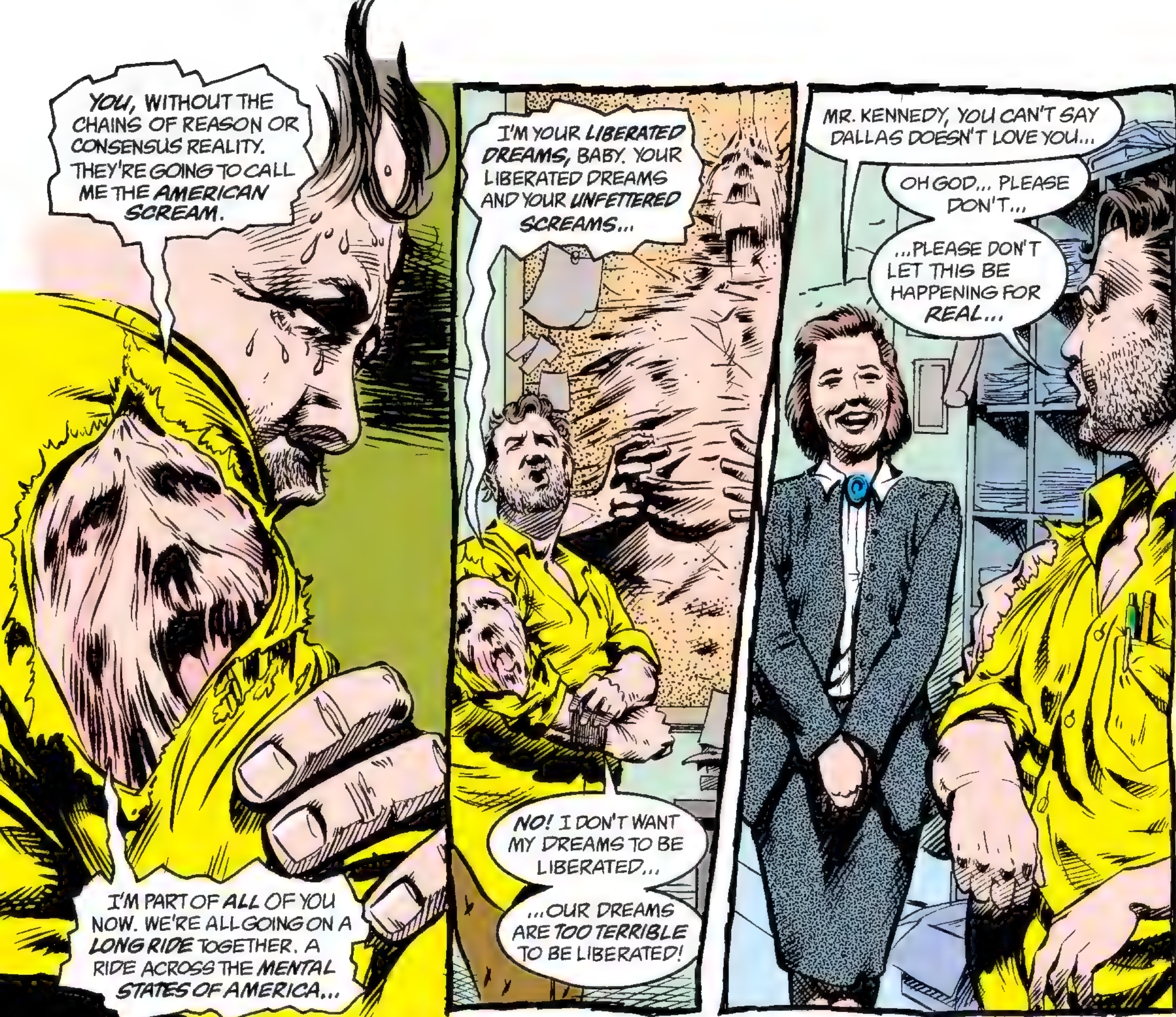


NO! GET OUT OF MY HEAD! I
DON'T CARE WHO KILLED YOU.
WHO KILLED ME, EH? WHO
KILLED MY DAUGHTER? WHO
KILLED MY LIFE?

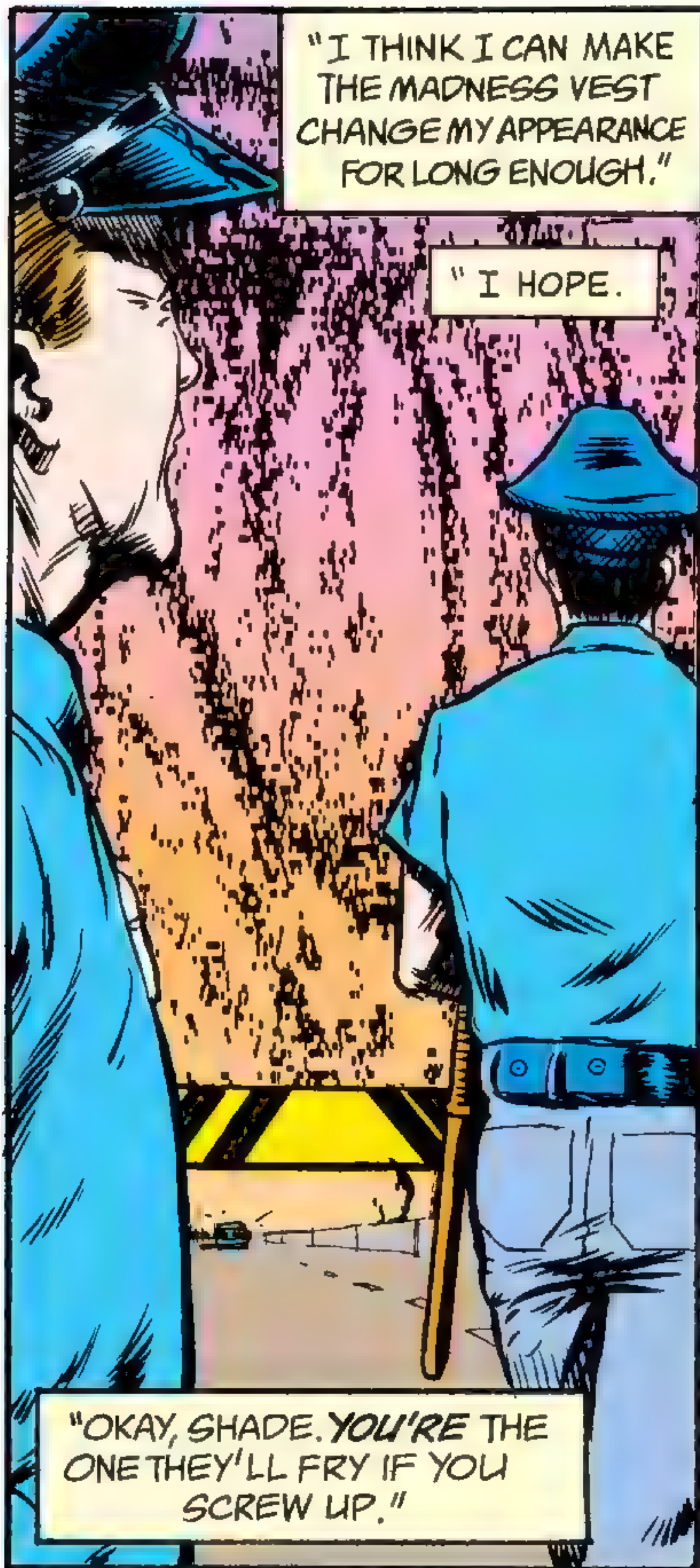
DO YOU CARE ABOUT THAT?
HUH? MISTER ICH BIN EIN
BERLINER KENNEDY? WHAT
DO YOU CARE ABOUT ME?



I'M YOU,
DUANE. AT LEAST,
I'M THE YOU YOU
REALLY ARE...







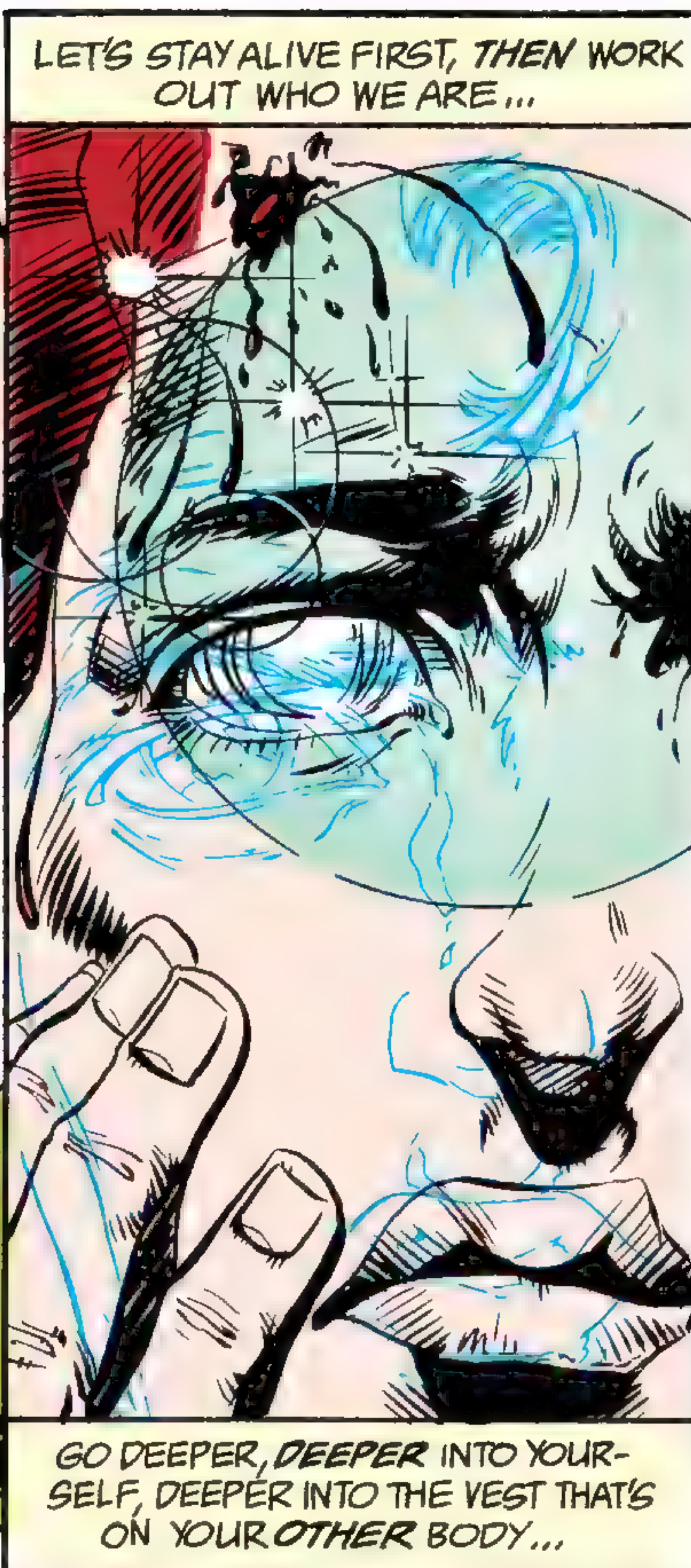
"I THINK I CAN MAKE THE MADNESS VEST CHANGE MY APPEARANCE FOR LONG ENOUGH."

"I HOPE."

"OKAY, SHADE. YOU'RE THE ONE THEY'LL FRY IF YOU SCREW UP."



WHAT A JOKE. I DON'T EVEN KNOW *WHO I AM*. WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE, REALLY? PARENTS? HOME? SHADE... WHAT KIND OF NAMES THAT? NO. IT'S TOO MUCH, TOO BIG, TOO MAD.



LET'S STAY ALIVE FIRST, THEN WORK OUT WHO WE ARE...

GO DEEPER, DEEPER INTO YOURSELF, DEEPER INTO THE VEST THAT'S ON YOUR OTHER BODY...



DEEPER. THE MADNESS VEST. PART OF YOU, THE REAL YOU, IN THE AREA OF MADNESS...

YOU ARE VEST, THE VEST IS YOU... CHANGE, CONCENTRATE, CHANGE...



CONCENTRATE...

THIS IS GOING TO BE *EASY* WHEN YOU KNOW HOW...



POLICE. CAN I SEE YOUR DRIVER'S LICENSE, PLEASE, MA'AM...

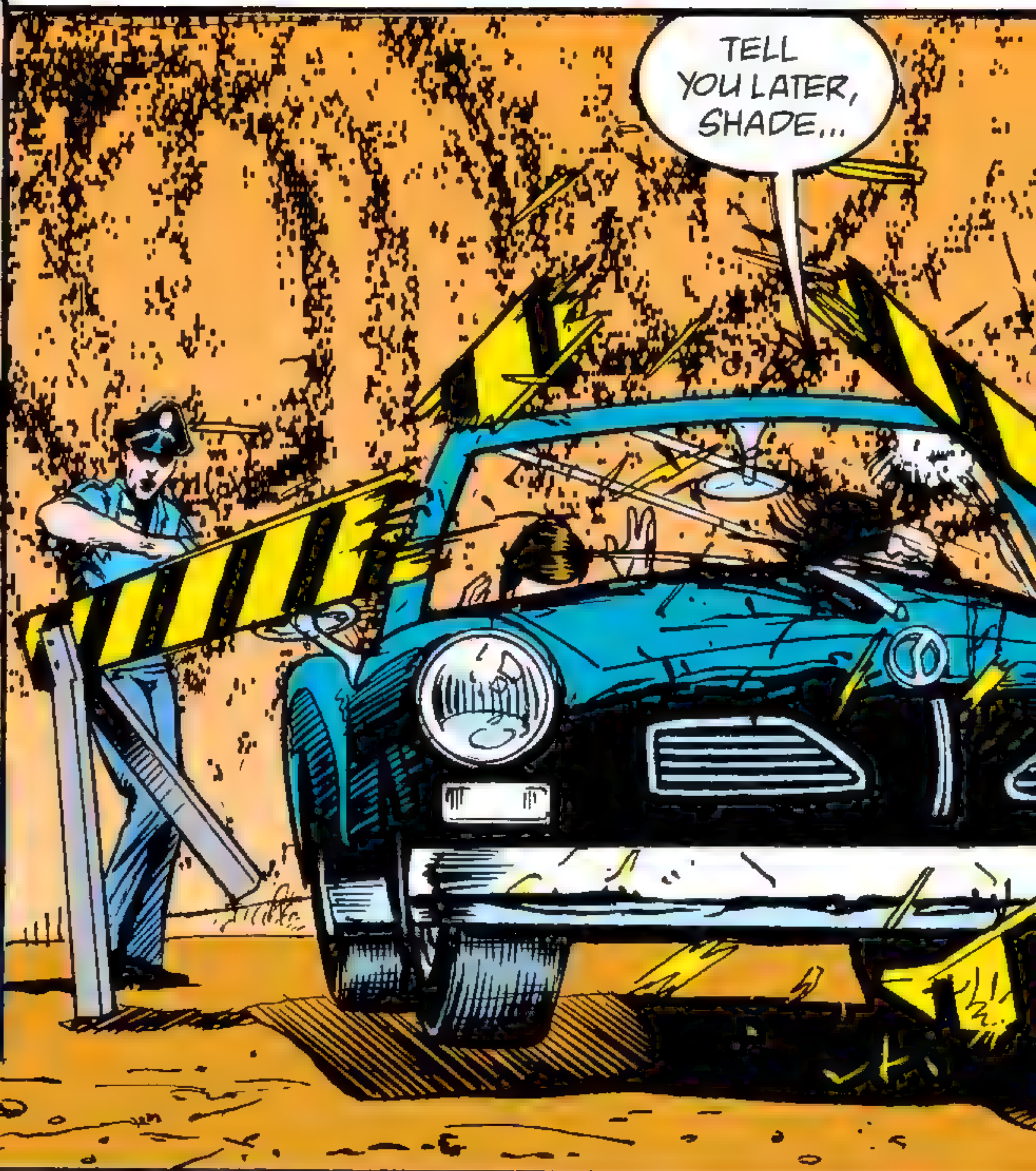
CHRIST, BILLY! LOOK AT HIM! LOOK AT HIS FACE...



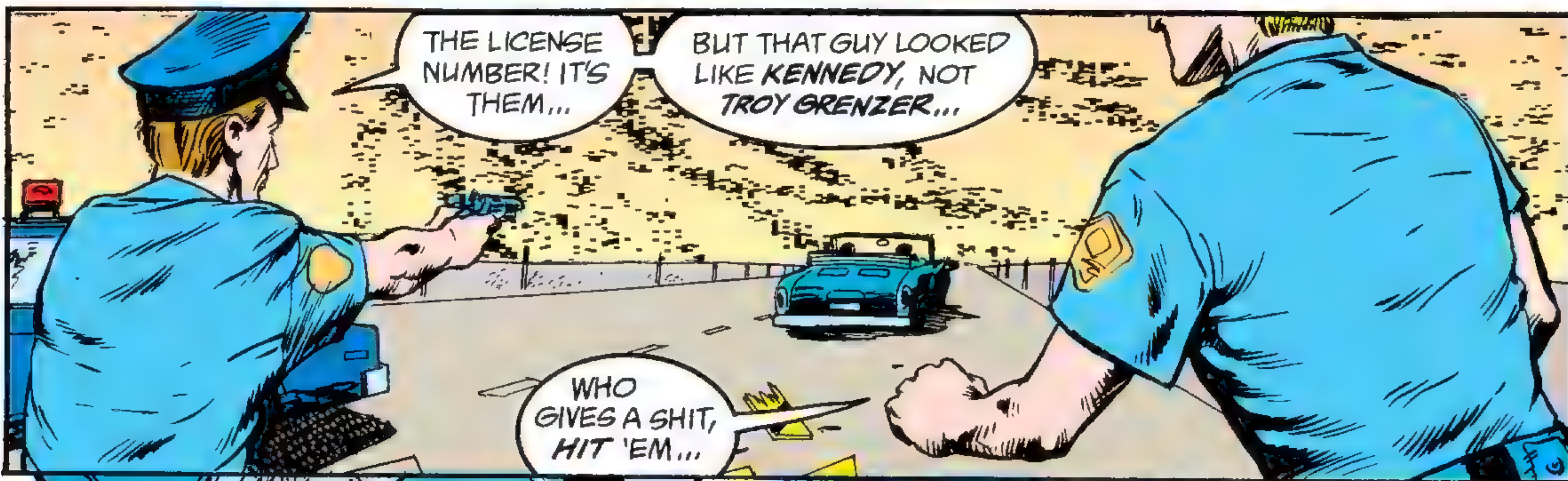
JEEZ, LOOKS JUST LIKE...
PRESIDENT KENNEDY...

OH NO...

WHAT'S WRONG?
WHY'RE THEY
STARING AT ME?



TELL
YOU LATER,
SHADE...

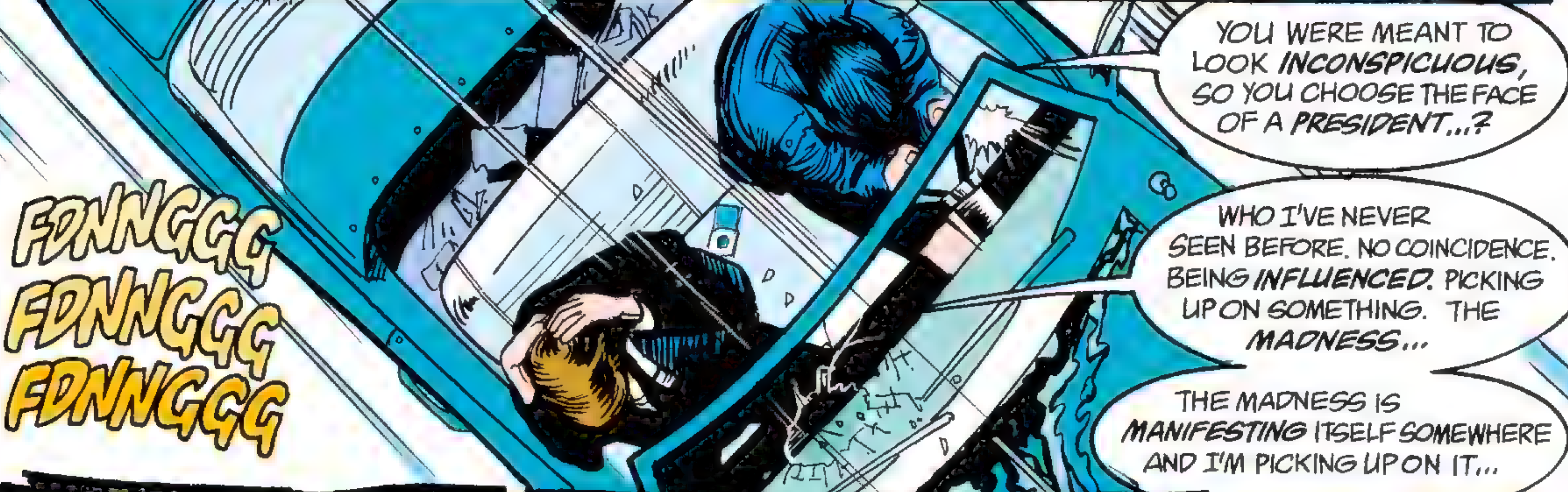


THE LICENSE
NUMBER! IT'S
THEM...

BUT THAT GUY LOOKED
LIKE KENNEDY, NOT
TROY GRENZER...

WHO
GIVES A SHIT,
HIT 'EM...

FDNNGGG
FDNNGGG
FDNNGGG



YOU WERE MEANT TO
LOOK **INCONSPICUOUS**,
SO YOU CHOOSE THE FACE
OF A **PRESIDENT**...?

WHO I'VE NEVER
SEEN BEFORE. NO COINCIDENCE.
BEING **INFLUENCED**. PICKING
UP ON SOMETHING. THE
MADNESS...

THE **MADNESS** IS
MANIFESTING ITSELF SOMEWHERE
AND I'M PICKING UP ON IT...



MR. KENNEDY, YOU CAN'T SAY
DALLAS DOESN'T LOVE
YOU...

MIDDAY TRAFFIC SLOW AND TORTUROUS
ON ELM STREET BY DEALEY PLAZA.

HEAT HAZE AND CAR FUMES AND HOT RUBBER.

PASSED THE COUNTY JAIL AND THE
DALTEX BUILDING AND THE TEXAS
SCHOOL BOOK DEPOSITORY...

A BROKEN DOWN TRUCK ON MAIN
STREET. TRAFFIC COPS BECK
AND KAWOSKI ON ELM.

OH, THEY'RE IN AN EVIL TEMPER TODAY,
WHAT WITH THE HEAT AND THE FUMES
AND THE TRAFFIC.

HOW THEY'D LIKE SOME NICE SMALL PUNK TO TRY SOMETHING. HOW THEY'D LOVE SOME LITTLE JERK TO GET
IN THEIR WAY, TO SAY "BOO," TO ASK THE TIME. ANY GODDAMN EXCUSE WOULD DO.

HEY, KAWOSKI,
GET A LOAD
OF THAT...

JESUS H... THAT'S SICK. GODDAMN CLEVER BUT SICK.
MUST BE DOUBLES OR WEARING MASKS OR
SOME SHIT...

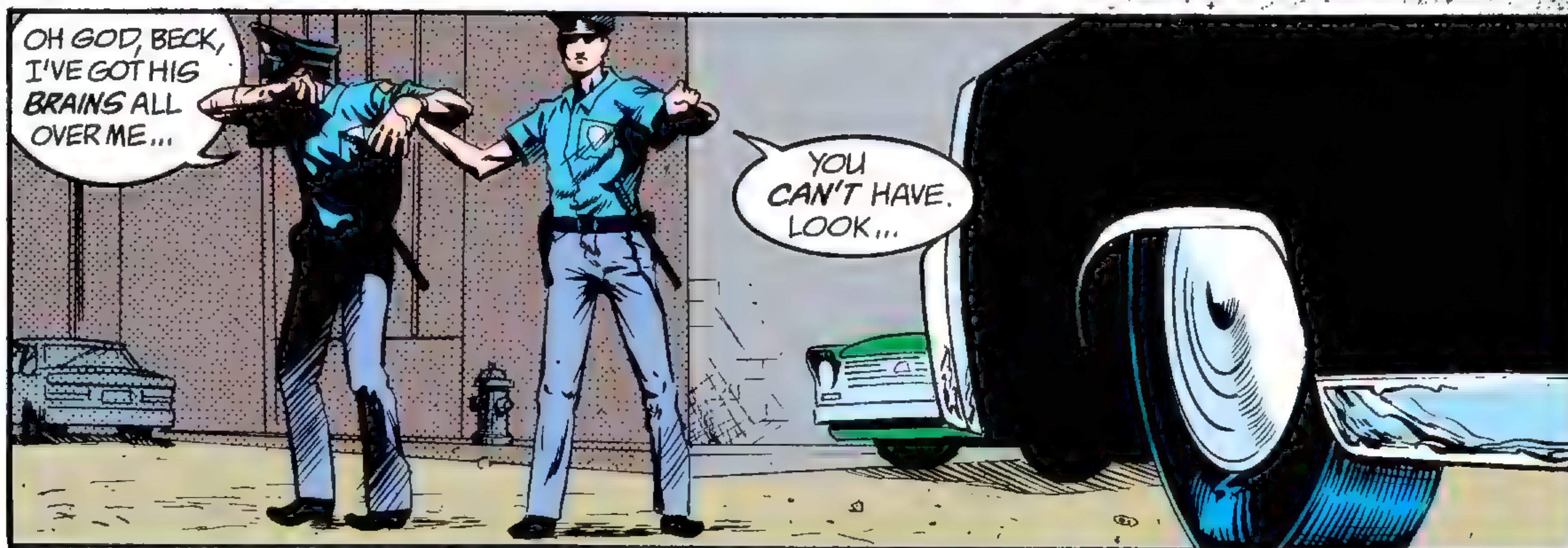
THERE'S GOTTA
BE A LAW AGAINST
IT, WHATEVER
IT IS.



IT'S REAL, AS REAL AS TELEVISION.

THE HALO OF BRAIN AND BONE ABOVE JACK'S SPASTIC HEAD...

A PARTING OF AIR, A SEVERING OF ALL THINGS POSSIBLE...



OH GOD, BECK, I'VE GOT HIS BRAINS ALL OVER ME...

YOU CAN'T HAVE. LOOK...



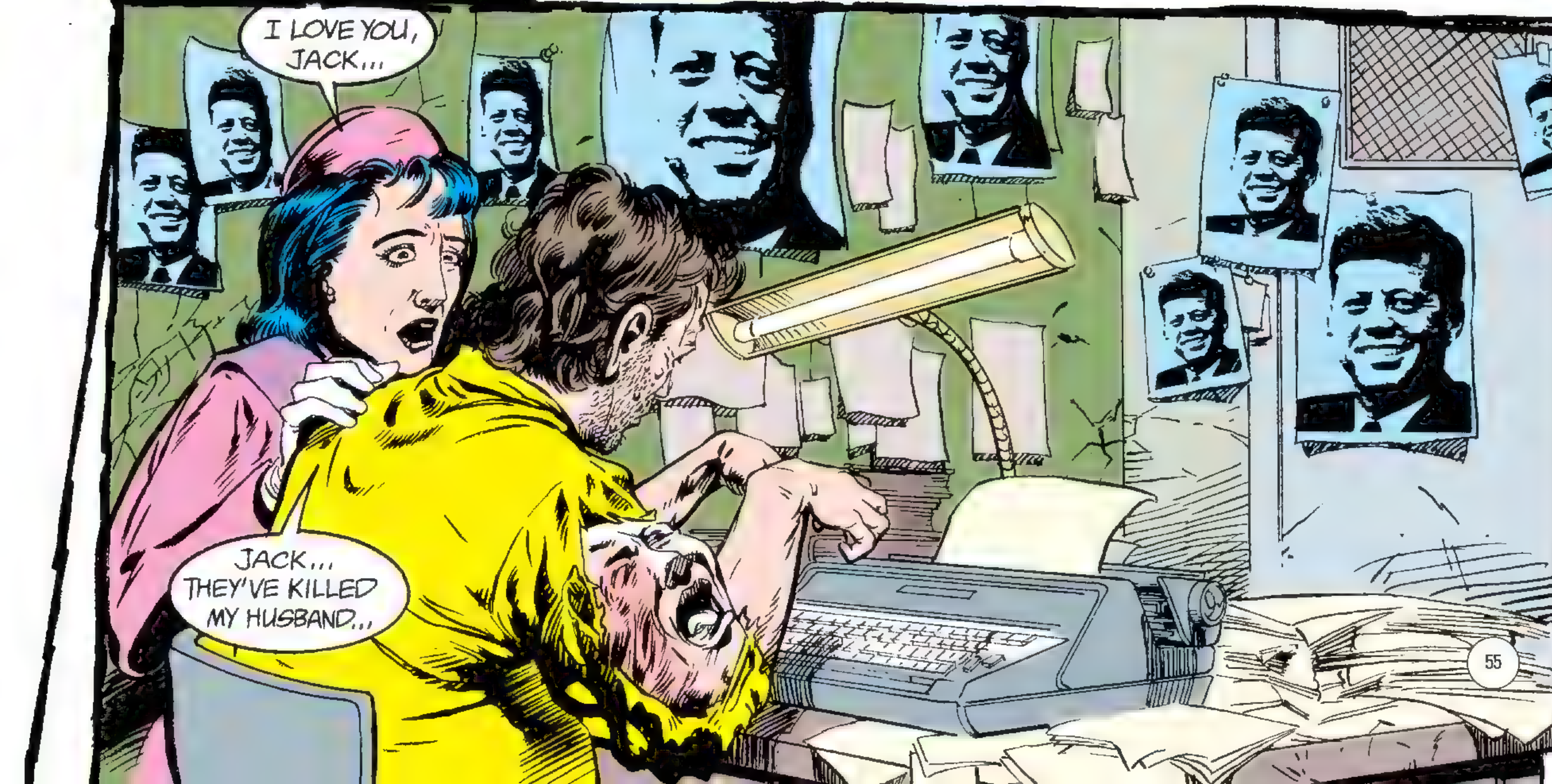
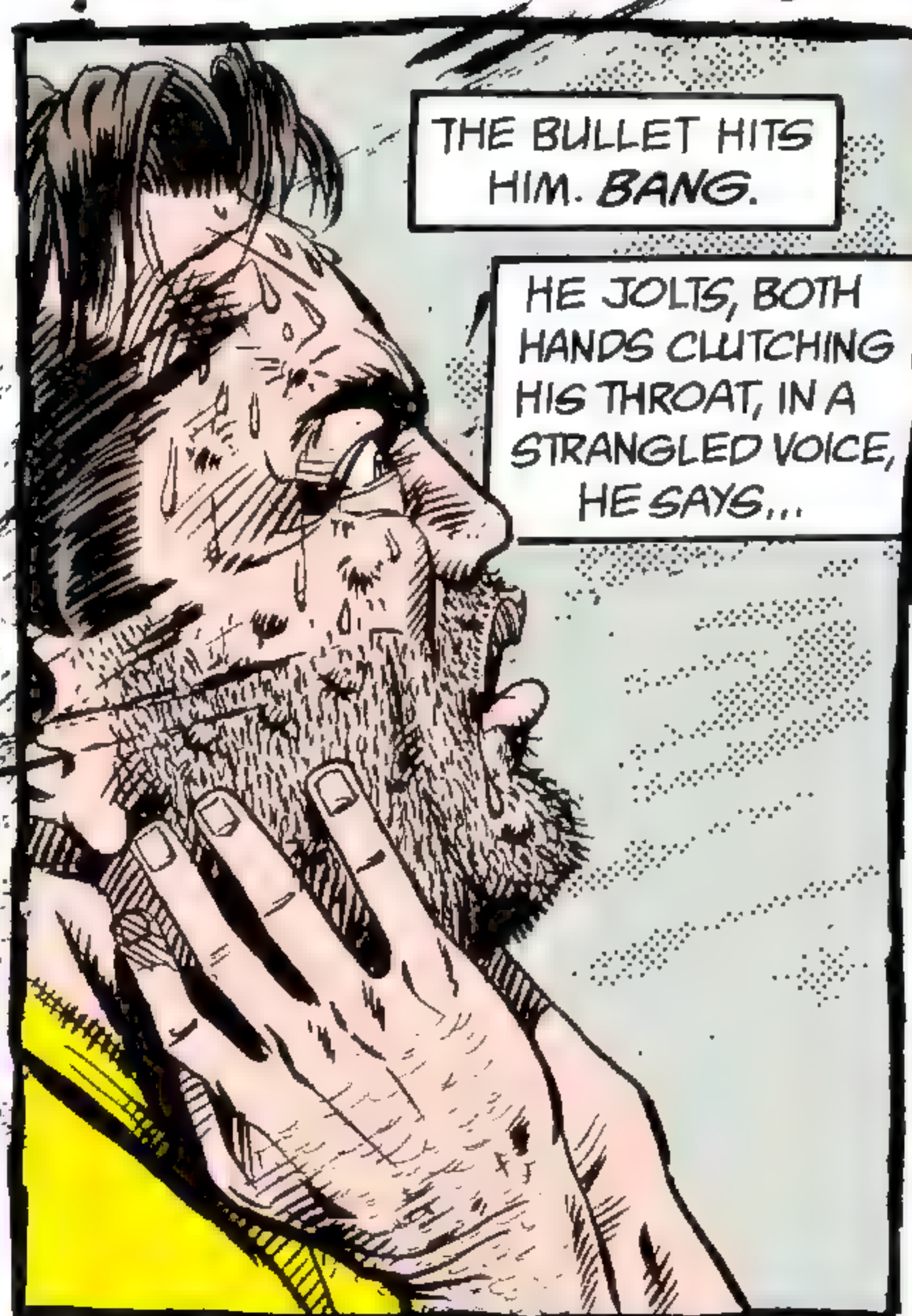
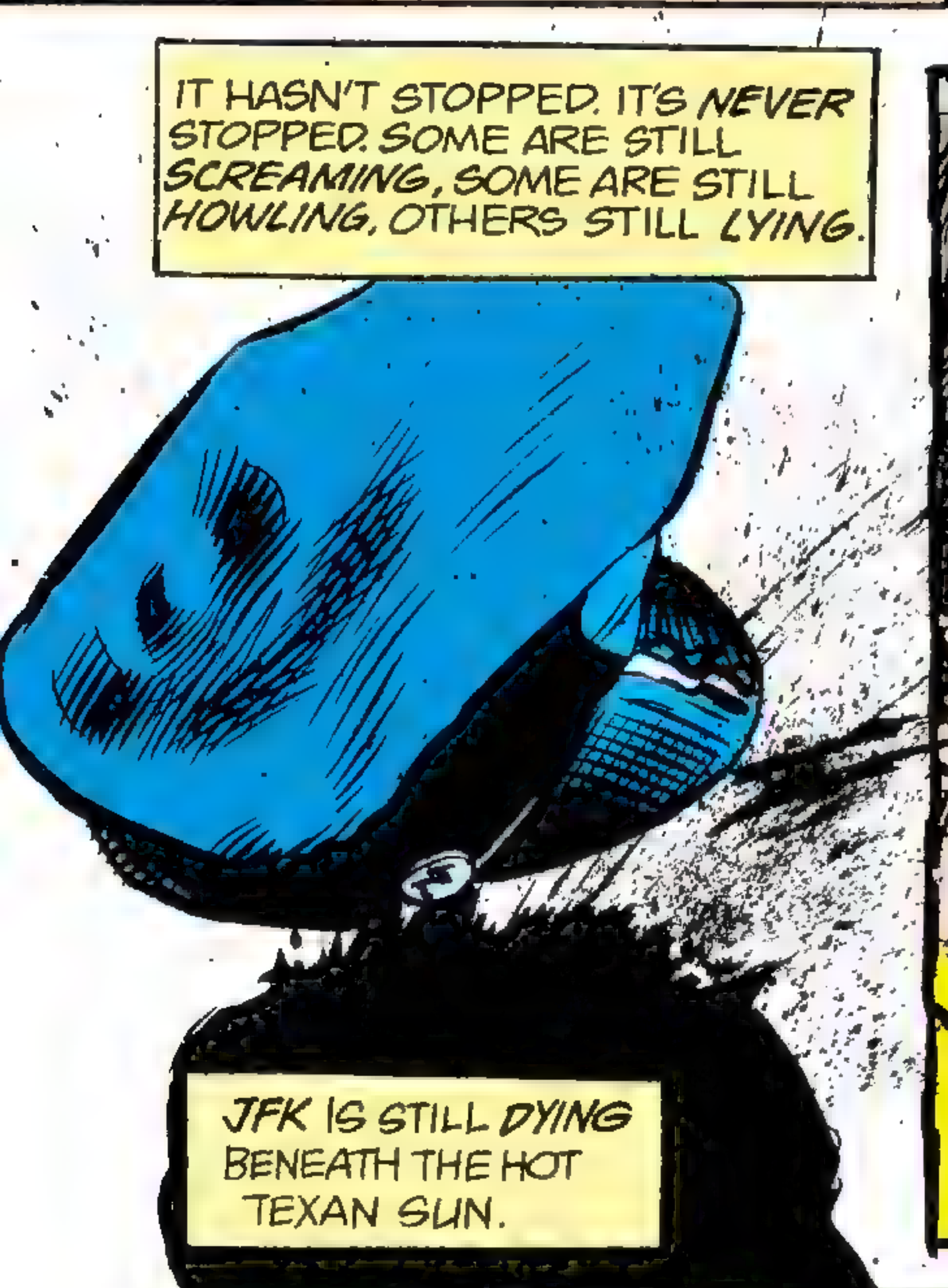
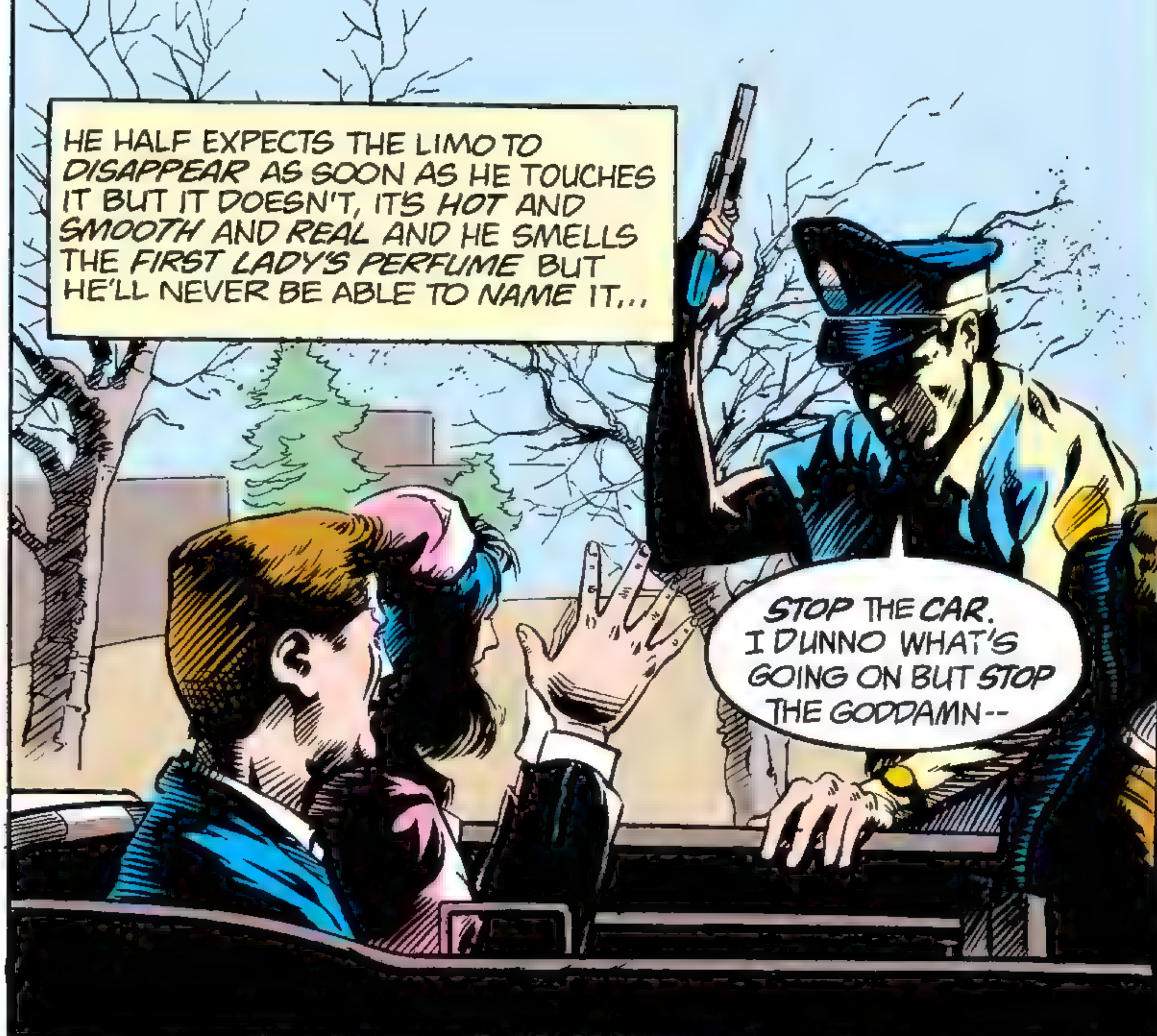
HIS TEETH WILL ALWAYS BE PERFECT, HIS SMILE THE SMILE OF A SUN GOD, HIS WIFE BESIDE HIM AND PERFECT.

TEXAN SUN ON THE LIMO'S PERFECT POLISHED BONNET...



THE CLICK, THE PUFFS OF SMOKE, THE SPASTIC HEAD, THE HALO, THE BULLETS. POOR JACQUELINE. NEARLY THIRTY YEARS AGO...

THE ZAPRUDER FILM, MAKING IT REAL FOR ALL OF US, FOR ALWAYS.



THEN SHE LOOKS AT HER HANDS AS THE LIMOUSINE PICKS UP SPEED AND SHE SAYS...

I HAVE HIS BRAINS ON MY HAND. I HAVE HIS BRAINS ON MY HAND.

I HAVE HIS BRAINS ON MY HAND...

IT WASN'T... IT WASN'T ME. I WAS JUST THE PATSY.

IF ONLY I COULD'VE REPORTED TO THE WARREN COMMISSION.

BUT THEY WOULDN'T LET ME.

IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY THE SPHINX OF THEBES STRANGLERD PASSERS-BY WHEN THEY COULD NOT SOLVE THE RIDDLE SHE PUT TO THEM...

THE TARMAK OF DEALEY PLAZA BEGINS TO BULGE AND RUPTURE. THERE HAVE BEEN TOO MANY QUESTIONS UN-ANSWERED, TOO MANY LIES, TOO MANY PEOPLE GETTING AWAY WITH TOO MUCH.

ROMANTIC AMERICA'S DEAD AND GONE. IT'S WITH JOHN KENNEDY IN HIS GRAVE.

WHERE'D THE LIMO GO? WHERE'S THE BIG LIMO?

THE COUNTRY'S BEING STRANGLERD, I'M BEING STRANGLERD, WE'RE ALL BEING STRANGLERD. THE BULLET'S STILL LODGED IN OUR THROAT...

THE TARMAC ON
DEALEY PLAZA
RUPTURES, TWISTING
LIKE A WOMAN IN
LABOR...

AND OUT IT
COMES, OUT
IT GROWS,

FROM THE
WOMB OF
DALLAS...

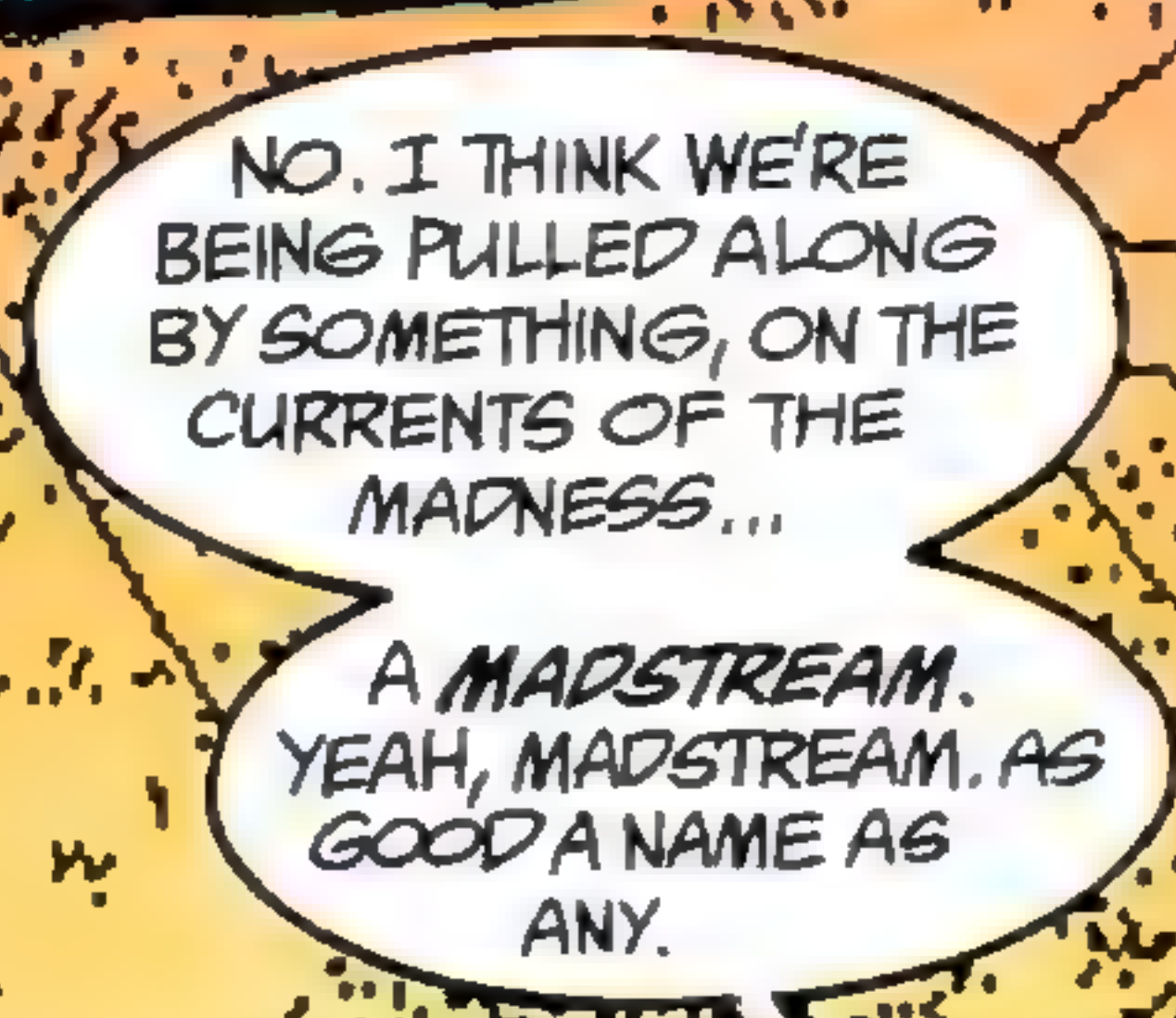
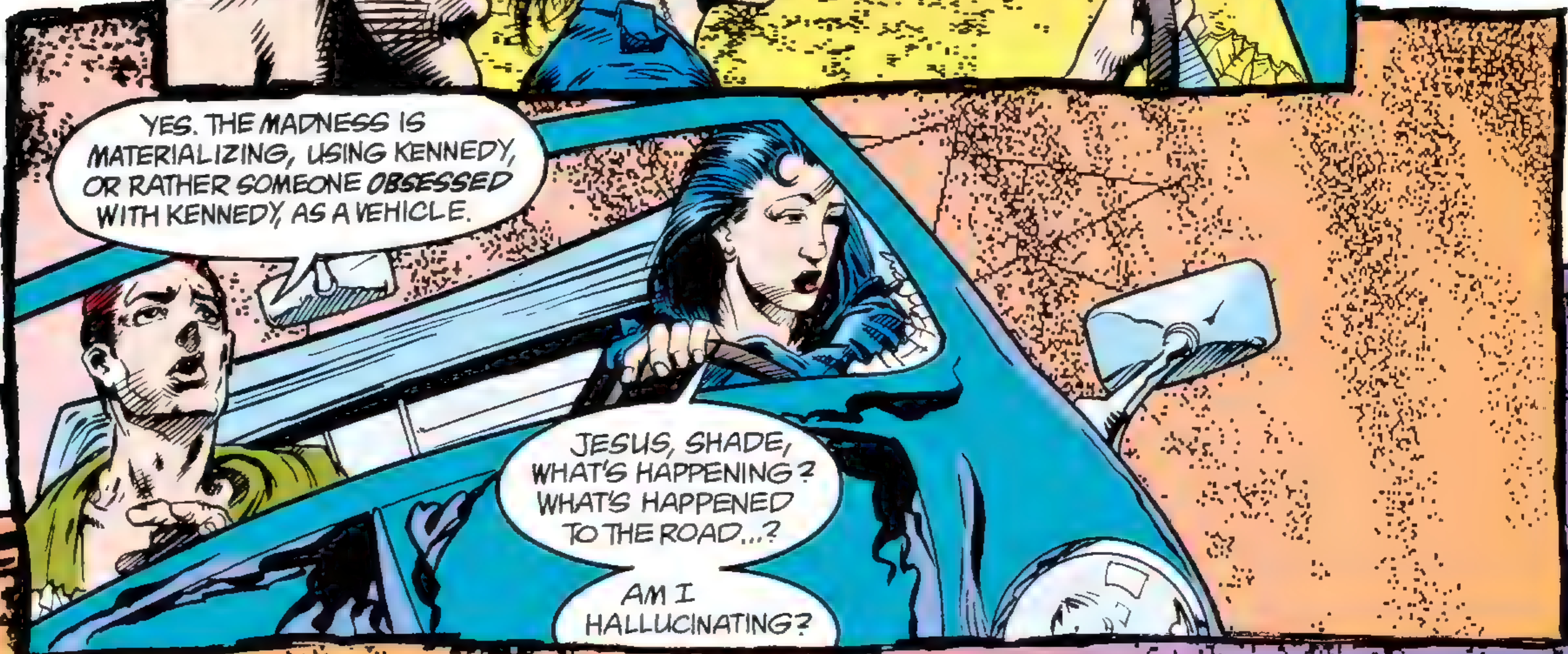
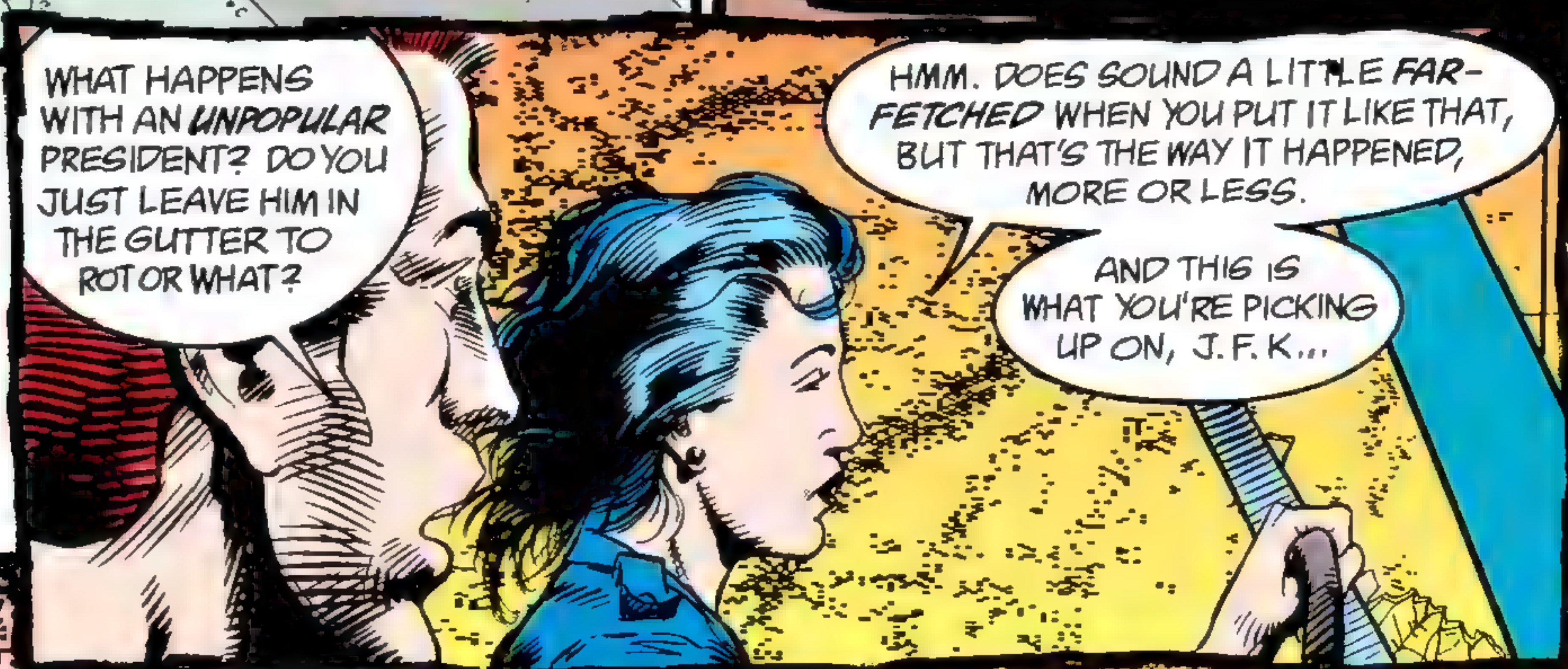
IMPREGNATED BY SEEDS
OF BLOOD AND BRAIN
AND BONE, OF CONSPIRACY
AND DECEIT, OF
COWARDICE AND
CORRUPTION AND GREED,
PLANTED HERE ON A
HOT BAD FRIDAY.

...THE KENNEDY SPHINX.
THE KENNEDY SPHINX...

FIFTEEN SECONDS
PAST 12:30 P.M.,
NOVEMBER 22,
1963...

WHO KILLED
JOHN F. KENNEDY?

AND WHO SHALL
ANSWER HIS RIDDLE?



IT'S COMING FROM THE AREA OF MADNESS. THAT'S PART OF ME. MY REAL BODY'S THERE...

THE MADNESS VEST IS PART OF ME, TOO. IT'S LIKE BEING TELEPATHICALLY LINKED. NO, PHYSICALLY LINKED TO THE MADNESS.

IT'S IN THE AREA BEYOND TIME AND SPACE. IT'S FLUID, LIKE DREAMTIME AND DREAMSPACE...

GREAT. YOU MEAN WE'RE ON A SHORT-CUT TO THIS KENNEDY MADMAN?

AND ALL THE STUFF INSIDE HIS HEAD'S GONNA BE OUTSIDE IT...?

I THINK SO. PRIVATE MADNESS MADE PUBLIC.

SEEMS EVEN IF I DON'T WANT TO FACE THIS, I HAVE TO. MY VEST'S AN UMBILICAL CORD, ATTACHING ME TO IT.

ATTACHING...

SO WHY CAN'T YOU BREAK IT? BREAK THE...

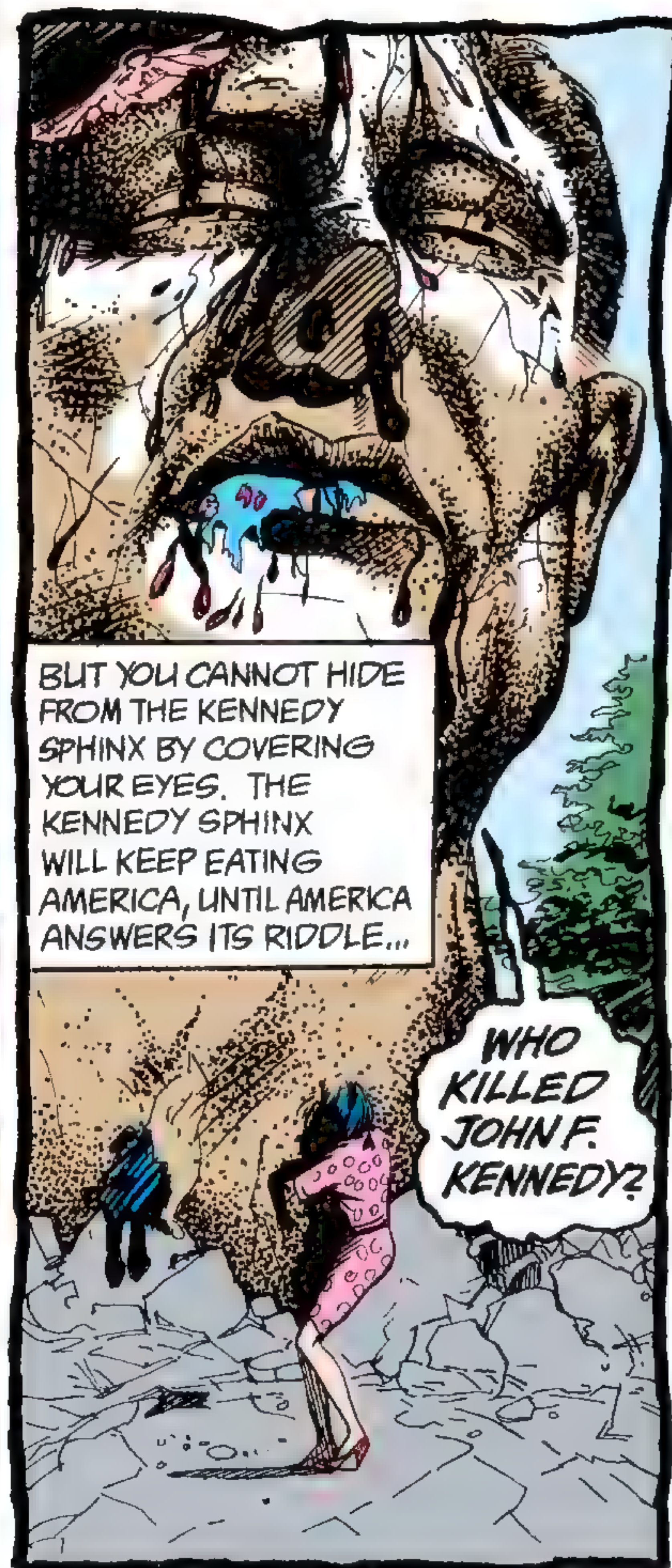
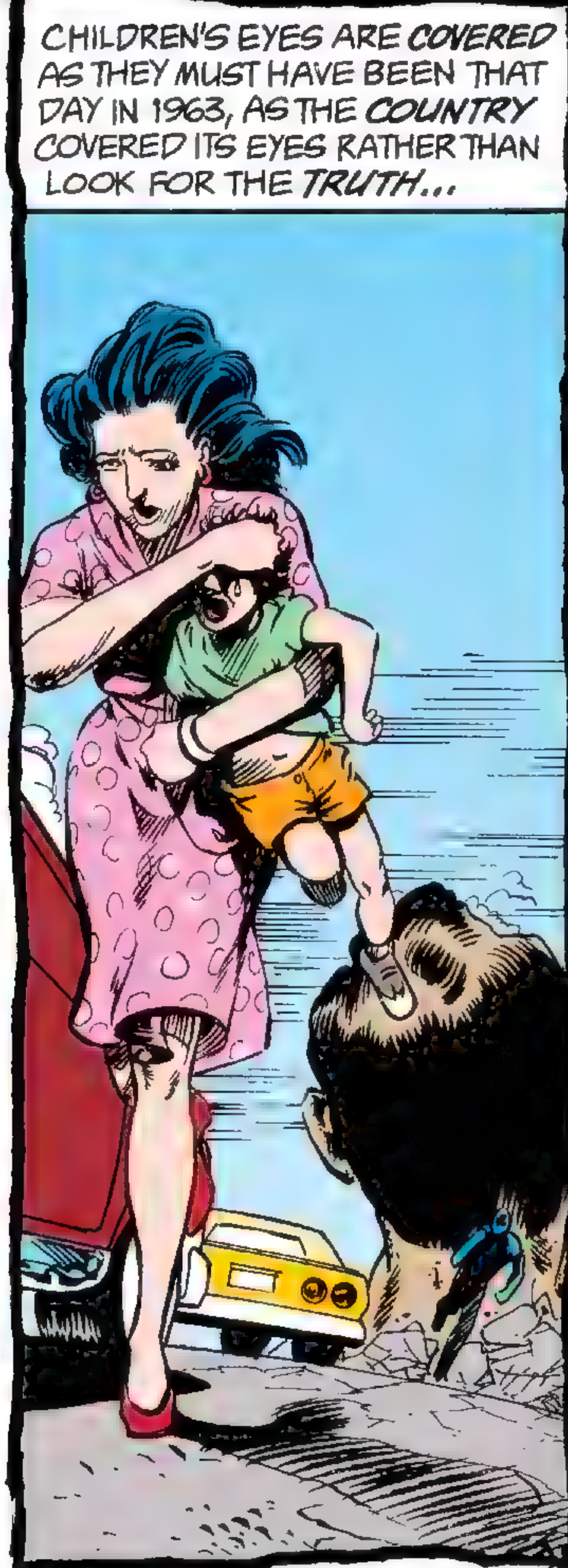
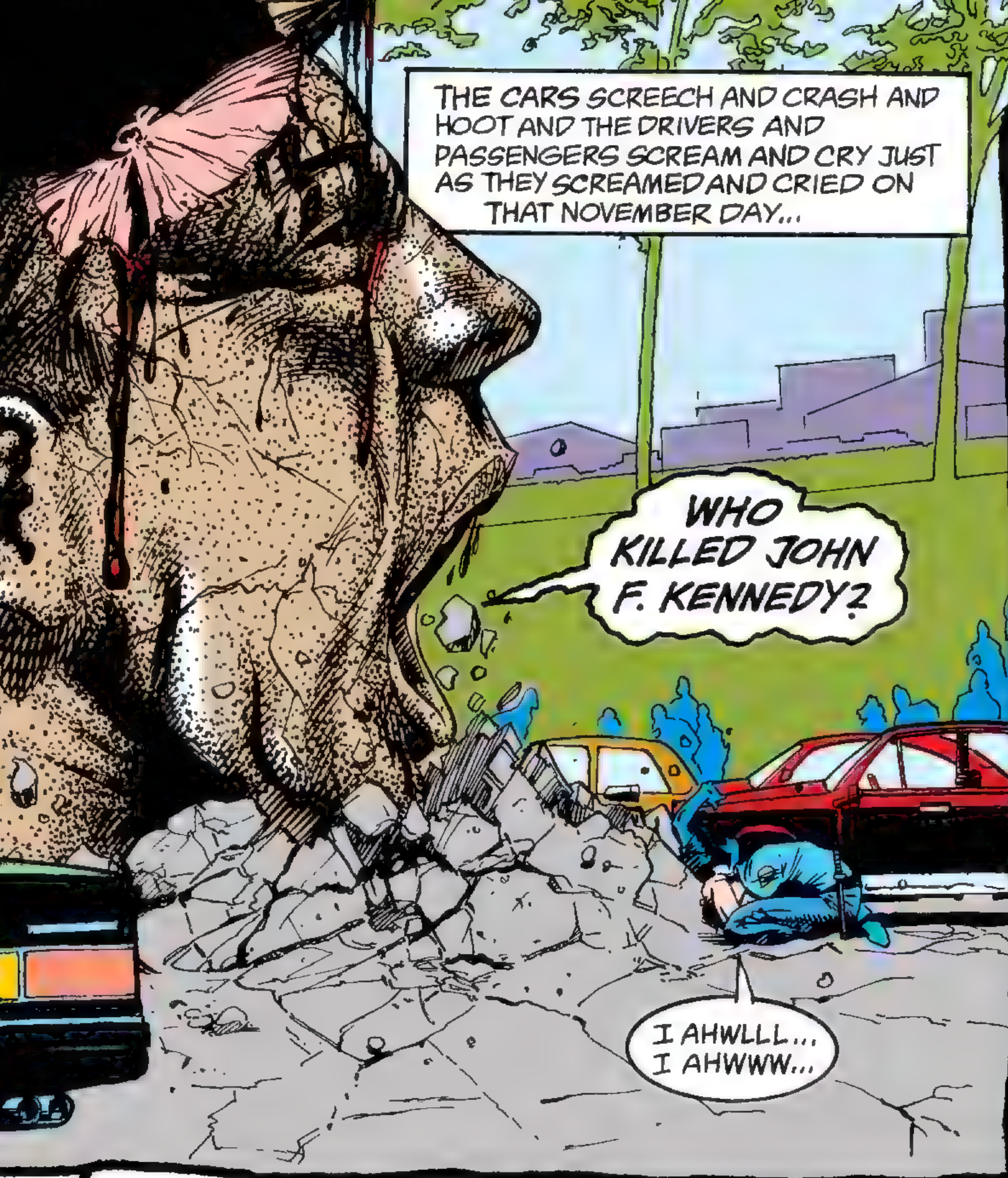
SHADE? SHADE, WHAT'S...

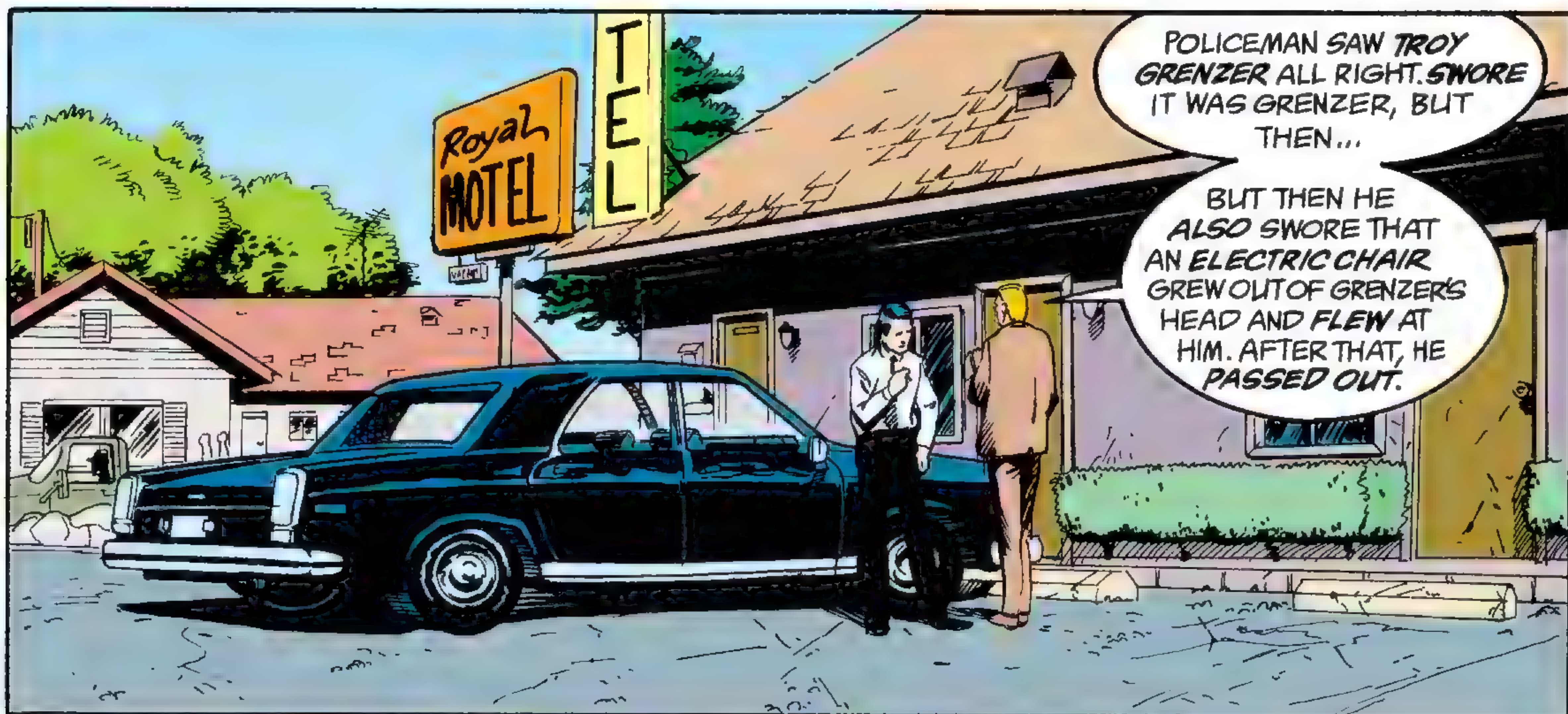
UGNN... SH... SHADE... DON'T...

I AIN'T SHADE. SHADE'S GONE, HONEY. SHADE'S HISTORY...

TROY GRENZER'S BACK. TROY'S THE BOY NOW...

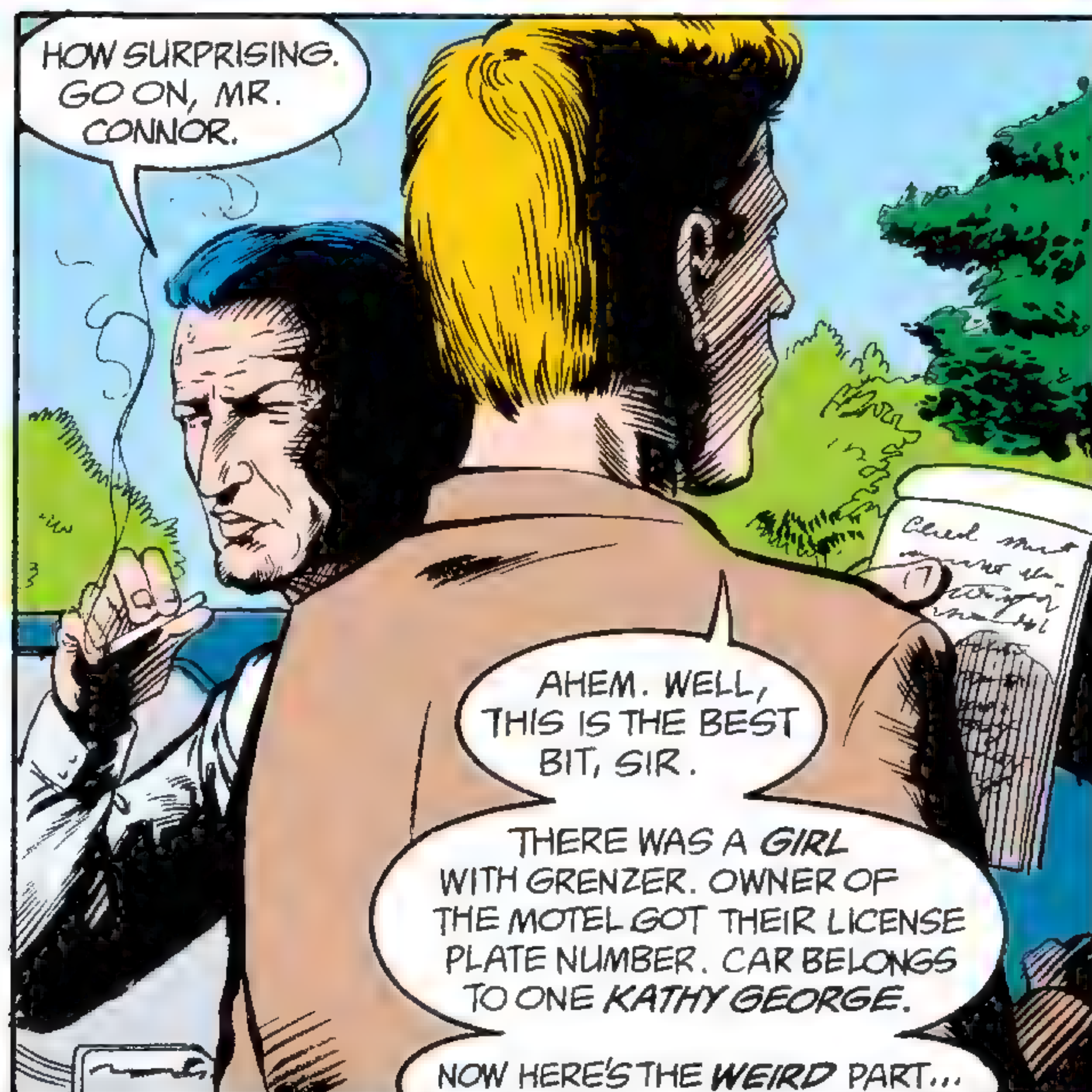
I GUESS YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NOW?





POLICEMAN SAW TROY GRENZER ALL RIGHT. SWORE IT WAS GRENZER, BUT THEN...

BUT THEN HE ALSO SWORE THAT AN ELECTRIC CHAIR GREW OUT OF GRENZER'S HEAD AND FLEW AT HIM. AFTER THAT, HE PASSED OUT.



HOW SURPRISING. GO ON, MR. CONNOR.

AHEM. WELL, THIS IS THE BEST BIT, SIR.

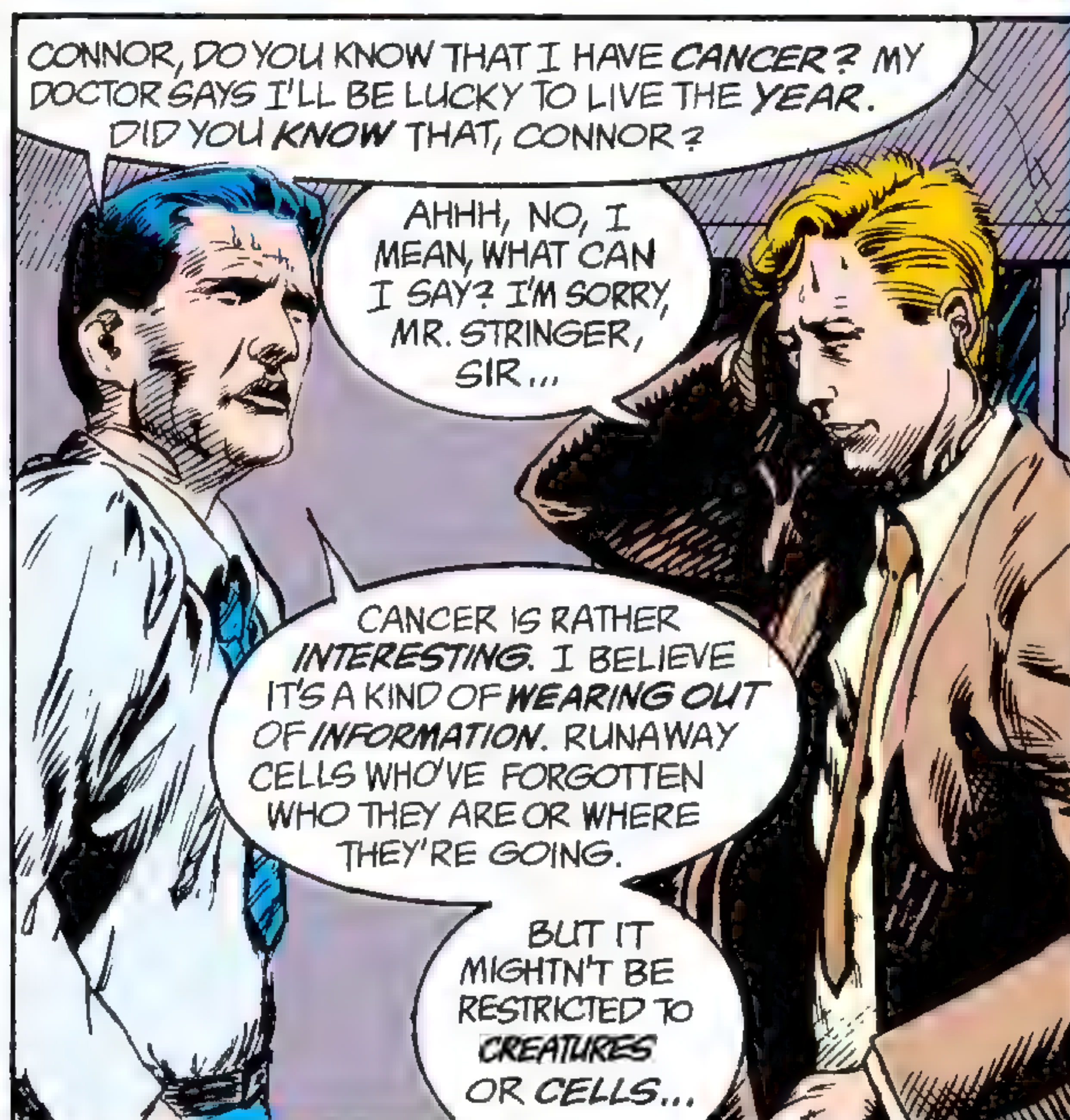
THERE WAS A GIRL WITH GRENZER. OWNER OF THE MOTEL GOT THEIR LICENSE PLATE NUMBER. CAR BELONGS TO ONE KATHY GEORGE.

NOW HERE'S THE WEIRD PART...



SHE'S THE DAUGHTER OF GRENZER'S LAST VICTIMS. THAT COUPLE HE BUTCHERED DOWN IN LOUISIANA.

GOT A HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS. SEEMS SHE HELPED HIM ESCAPE. SEEMS THEY'RE ON THE ROAD TOGETHER.

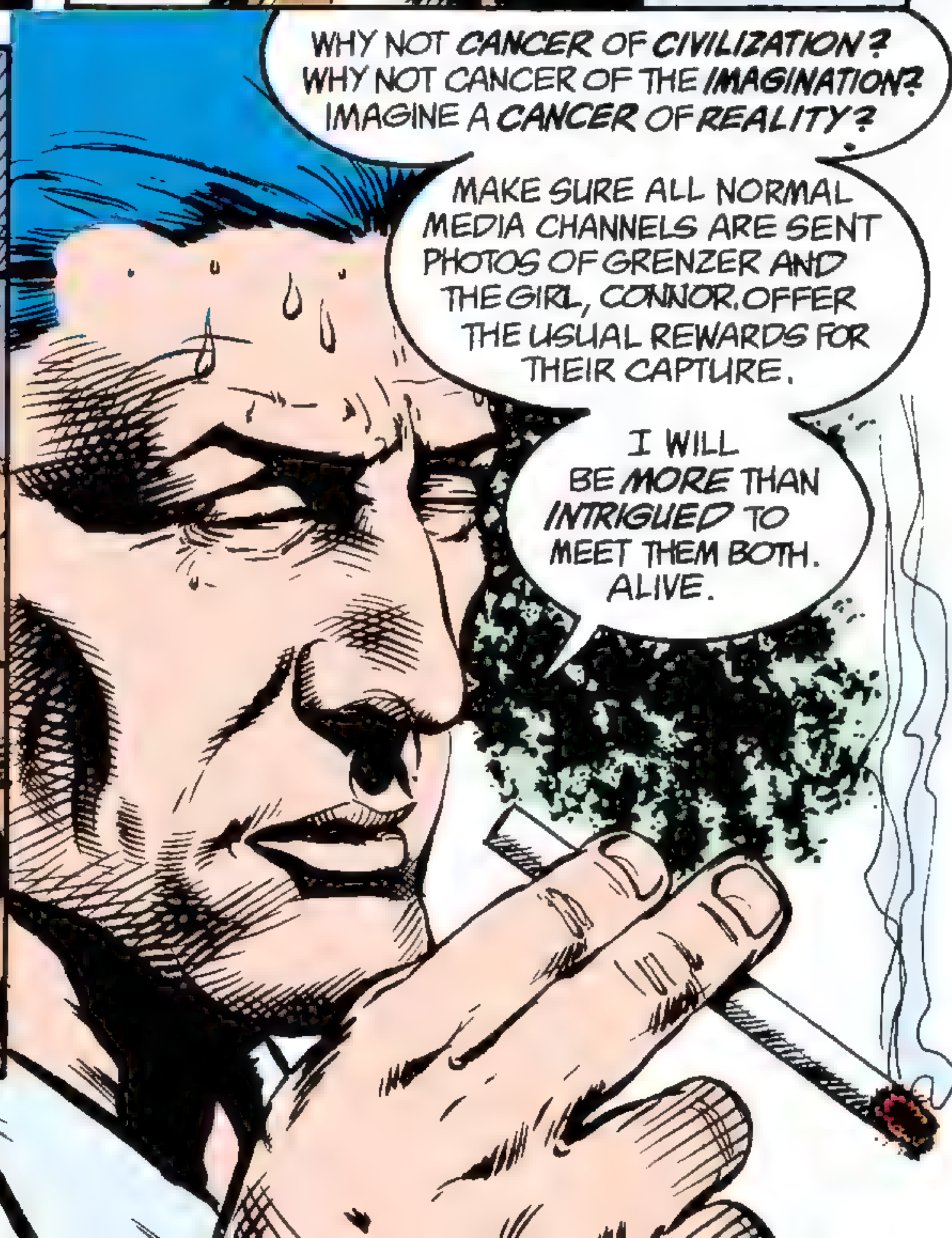


CONNOR, DO YOU KNOW THAT I HAVE CANCER? MY DOCTOR SAYS I'LL BE LUCKY TO LIVE THE YEAR. DID YOU KNOW THAT, CONNOR?

AHHH, NO, I MEAN, WHAT CAN I SAY? I'M SORRY, MR. STRINGER, SIR...

CANCER IS RATHER INTERESTING. I BELIEVE IT'S A KIND OF WEARING OUT OF INFORMATION. RUNAWAY CELLS WHO'VE FORGOTTEN WHO THEY ARE OR WHERE THEY'RE GOING.

BUT IT MIGHTN'T BE RESTRICTED TO CREATURES OR CELLS...



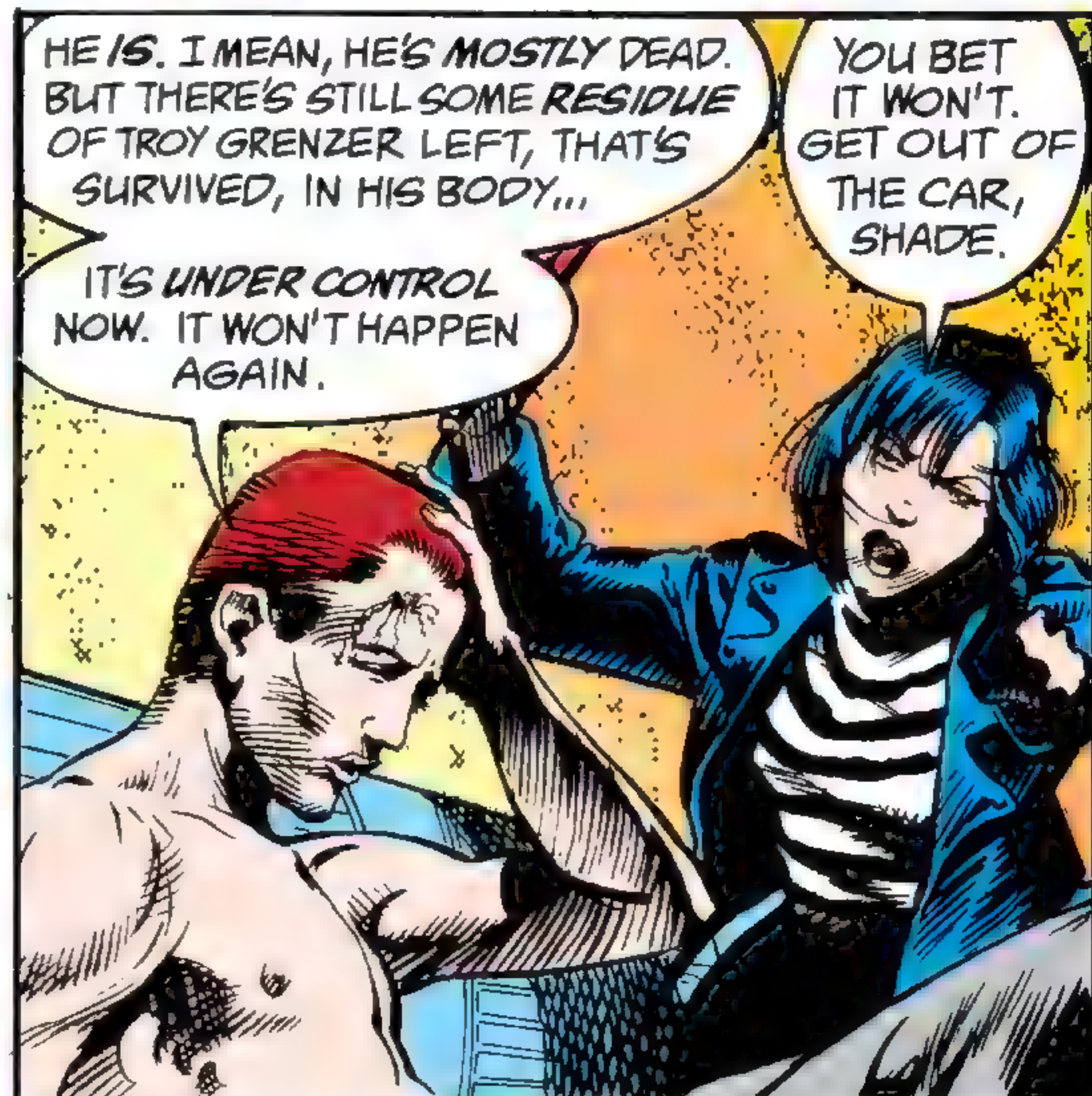
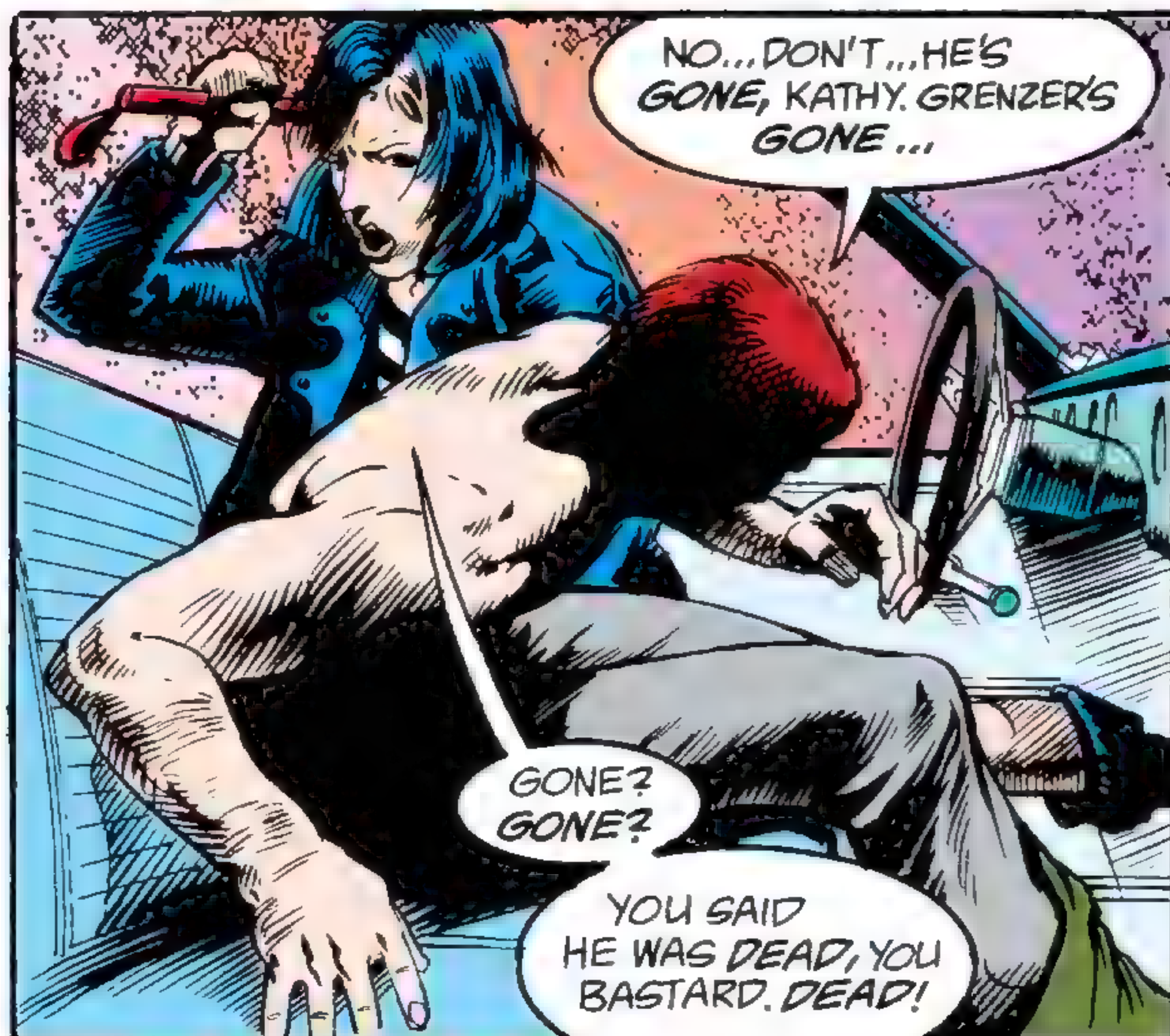
WHY NOT CANCER OF CIVILIZATION? WHY NOT CANCER OF THE IMAGINATION? IMAGINE A CANCER OF REALITY?

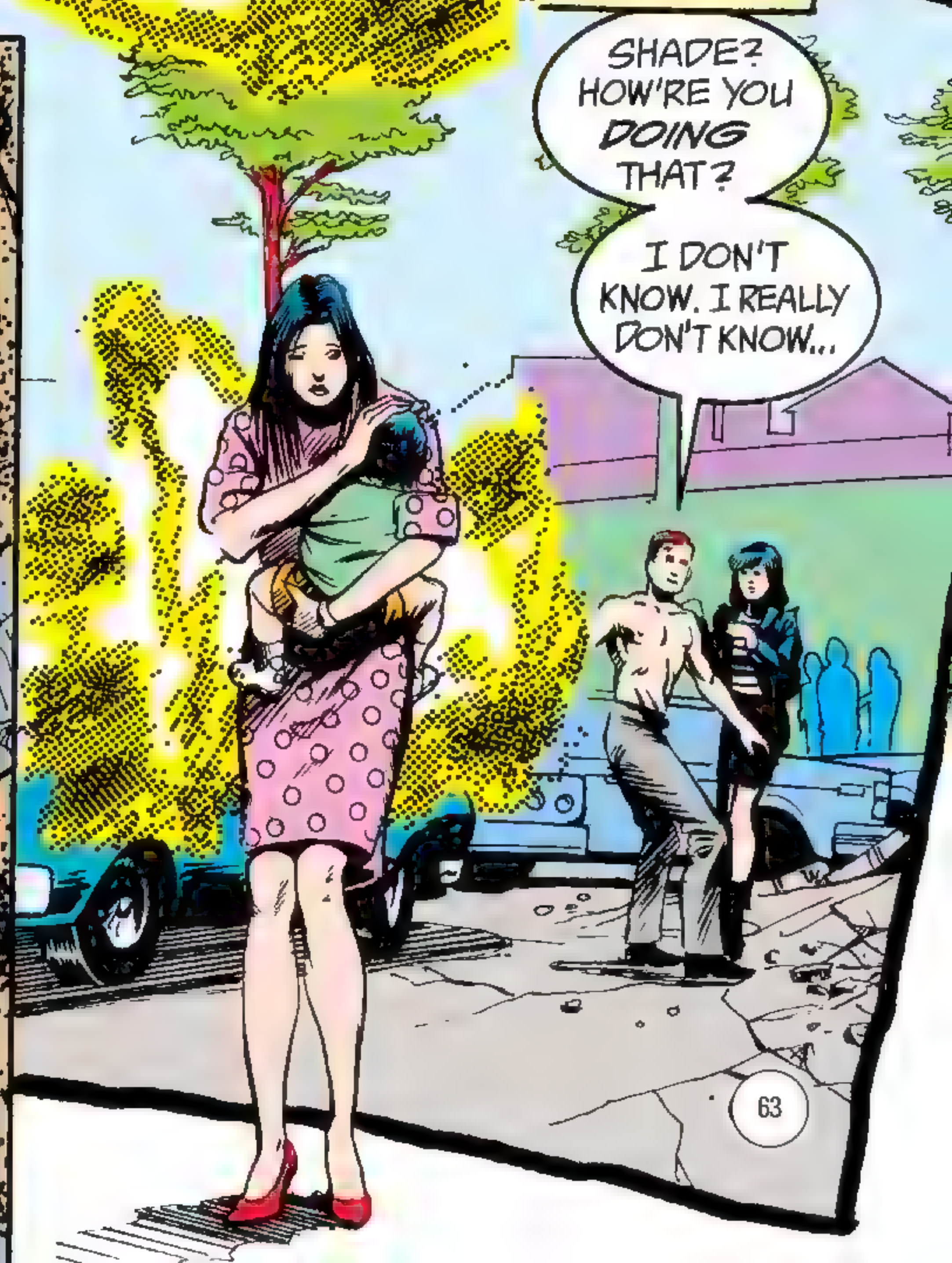
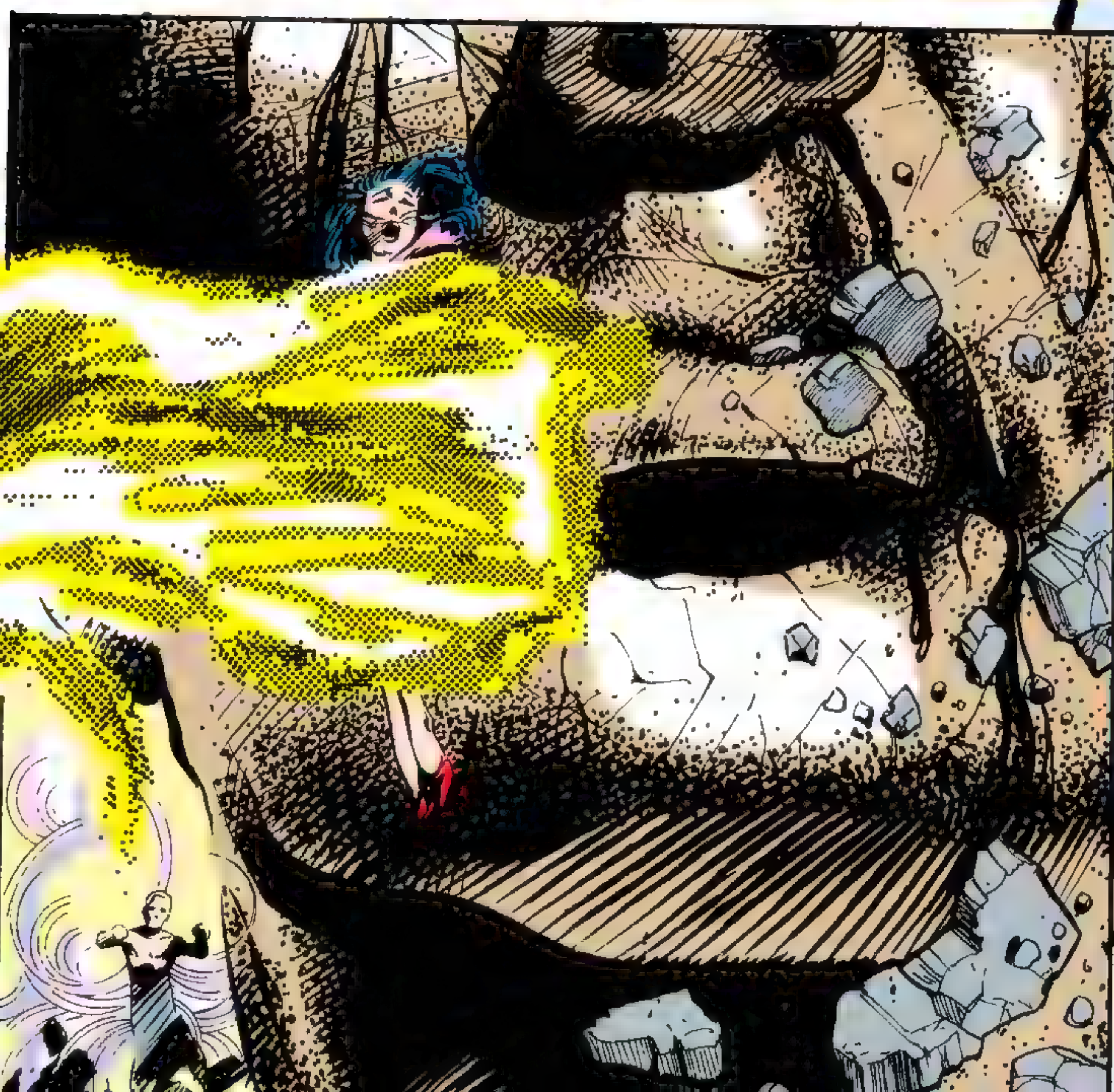
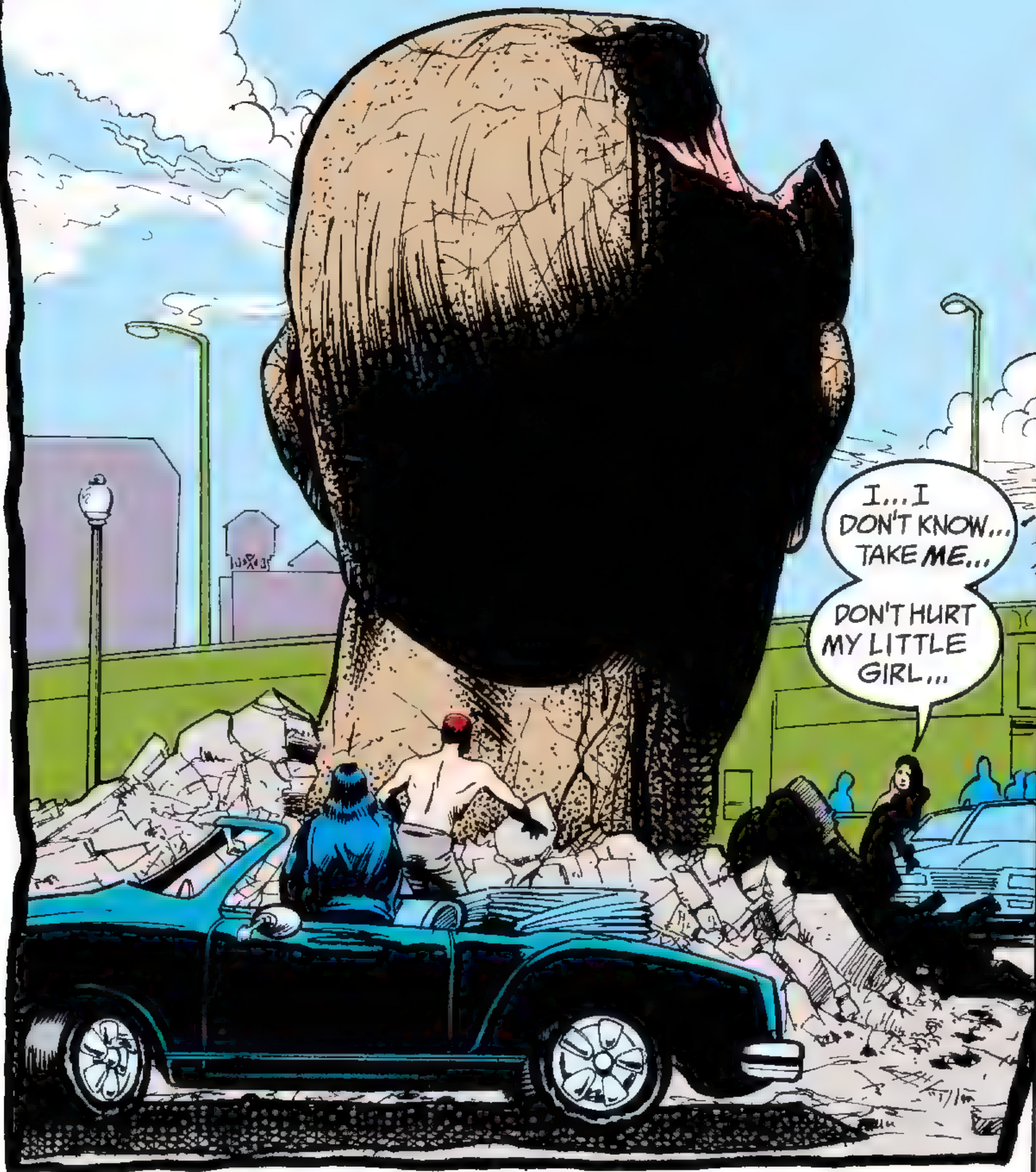
MAKE SURE ALL NORMAL MEDIA CHANNELS ARE SENT PHOTOS OF GRENZER AND THE GIRL, CONNOR. OFFER THE USUAL REWARDS FOR THEIR CAPTURE.

I WILL BE MORE THAN INTRIGUED TO MEET THEM BOTH. ALIVE.

GET OFF...
SHADE, COME BACK,
SHADE...

NGGG... NO GOOD
STRUGGLING, GIRL. JUST
TAKE IT. YOU ALL WANT
IT...







WHO
KILLED JOHN F.
KENNEDY?

HOLD ON TO
ME, KATHY. I'M
GOING TO TRY
TO FLY...

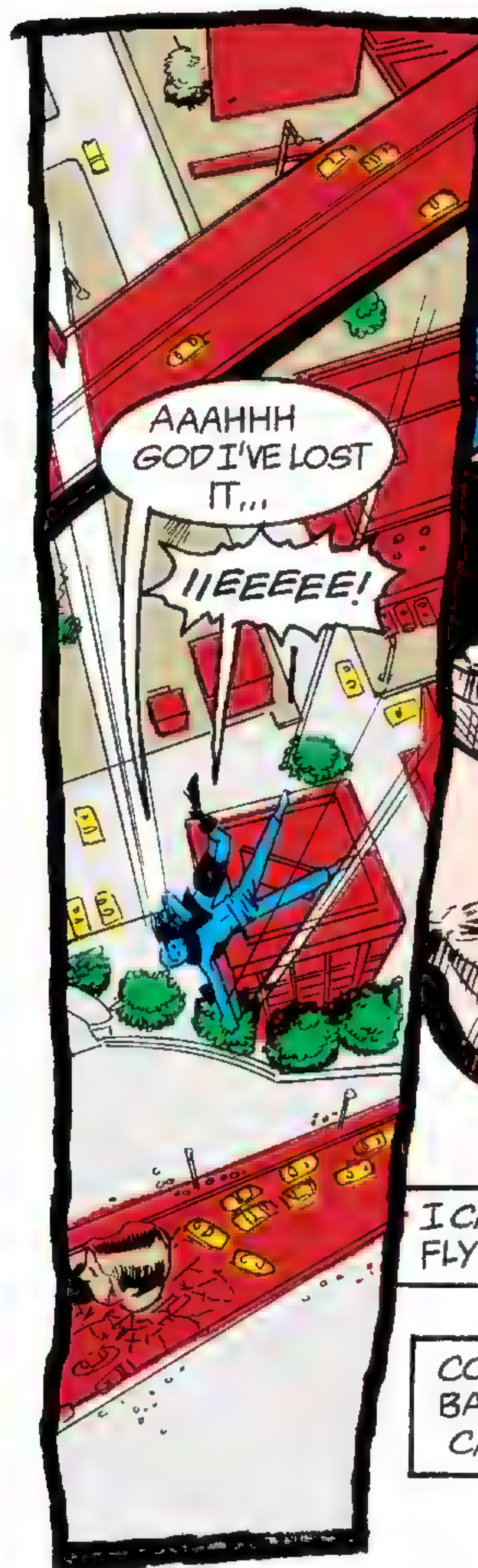
FLY?!?



AIEEEOOOO!

SHADE.
NAAA...

SHUT UP,
I'M TRYING TO
CONCENTRATE...



AAAAHH
GOD I'VE LOST
IT...

IIEEEEEE!

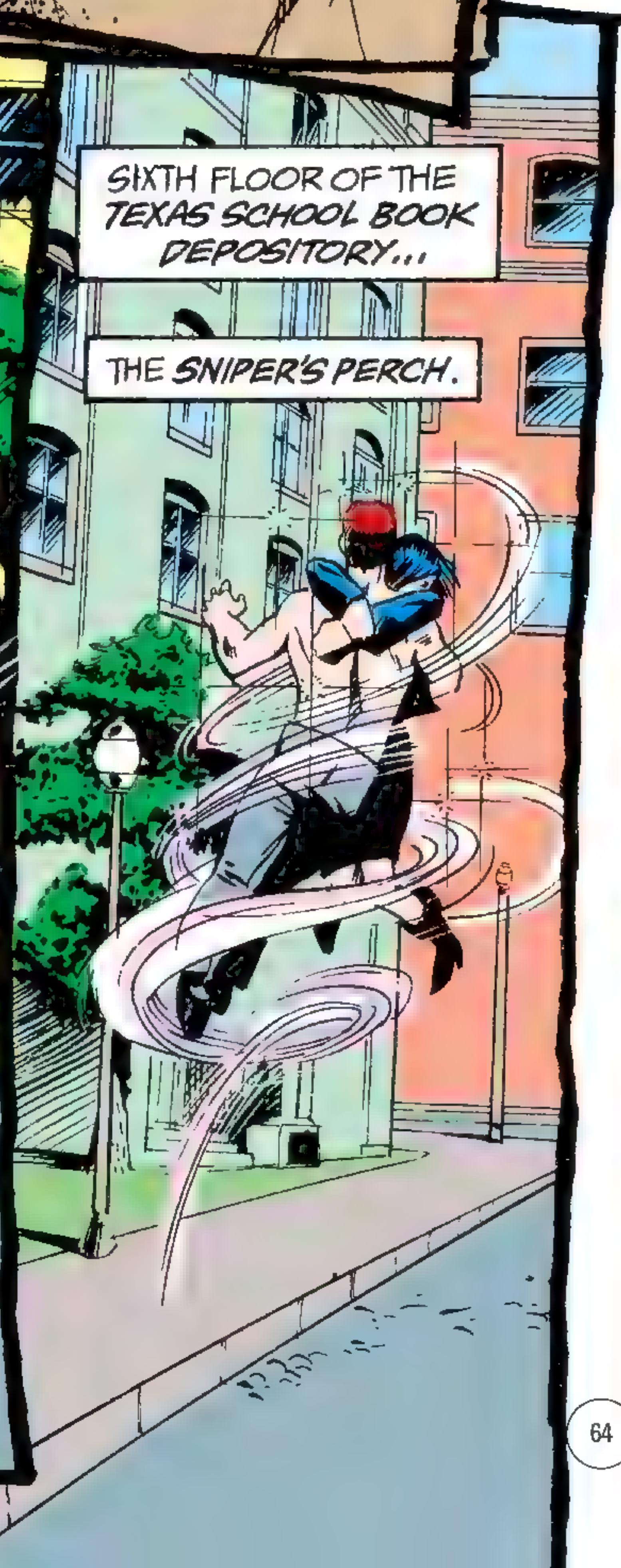
I CAN FLY I CAN
FLY I CAN FLY

COME ON YOU
BASTARD I
CAN FLY!



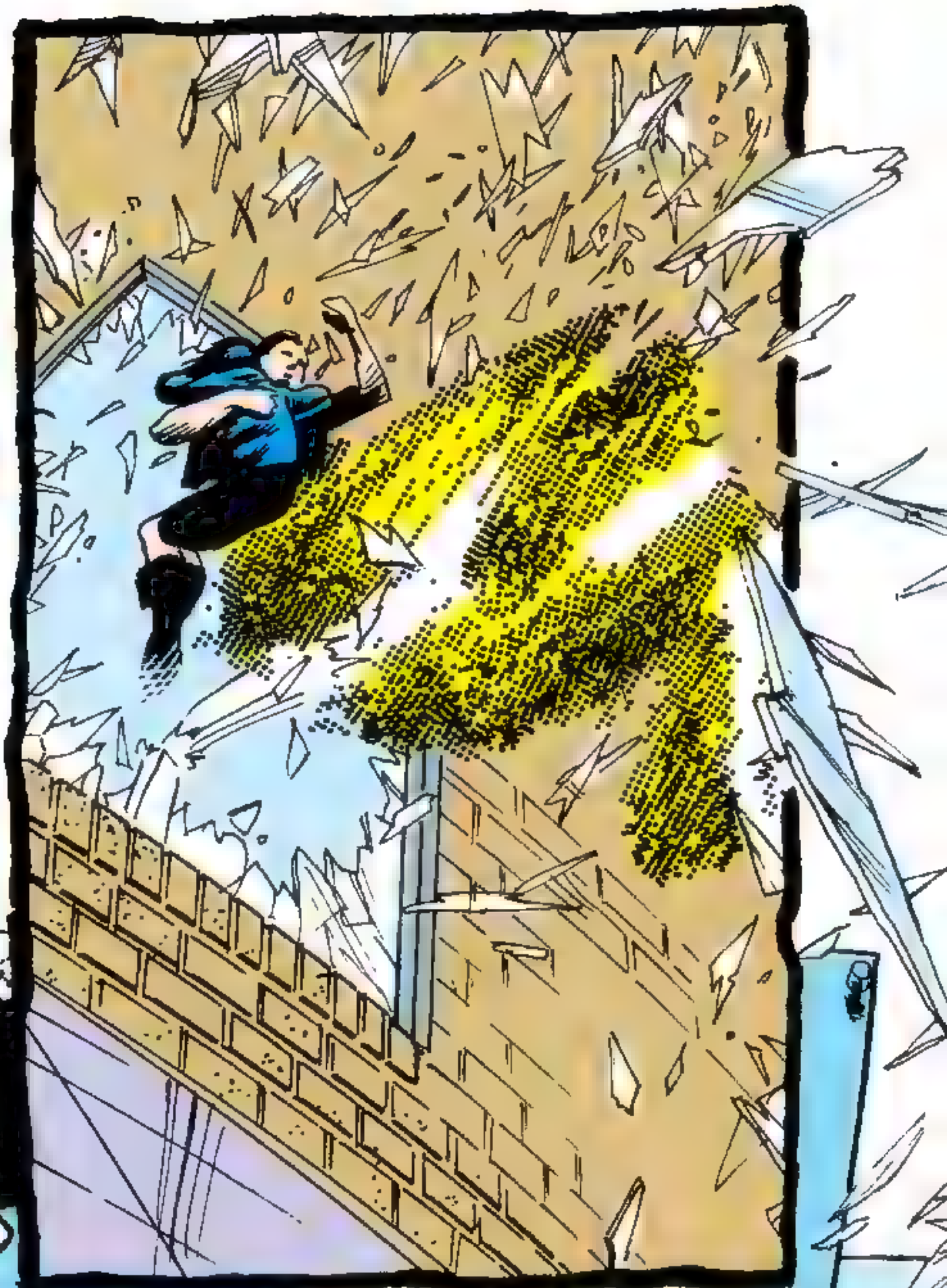
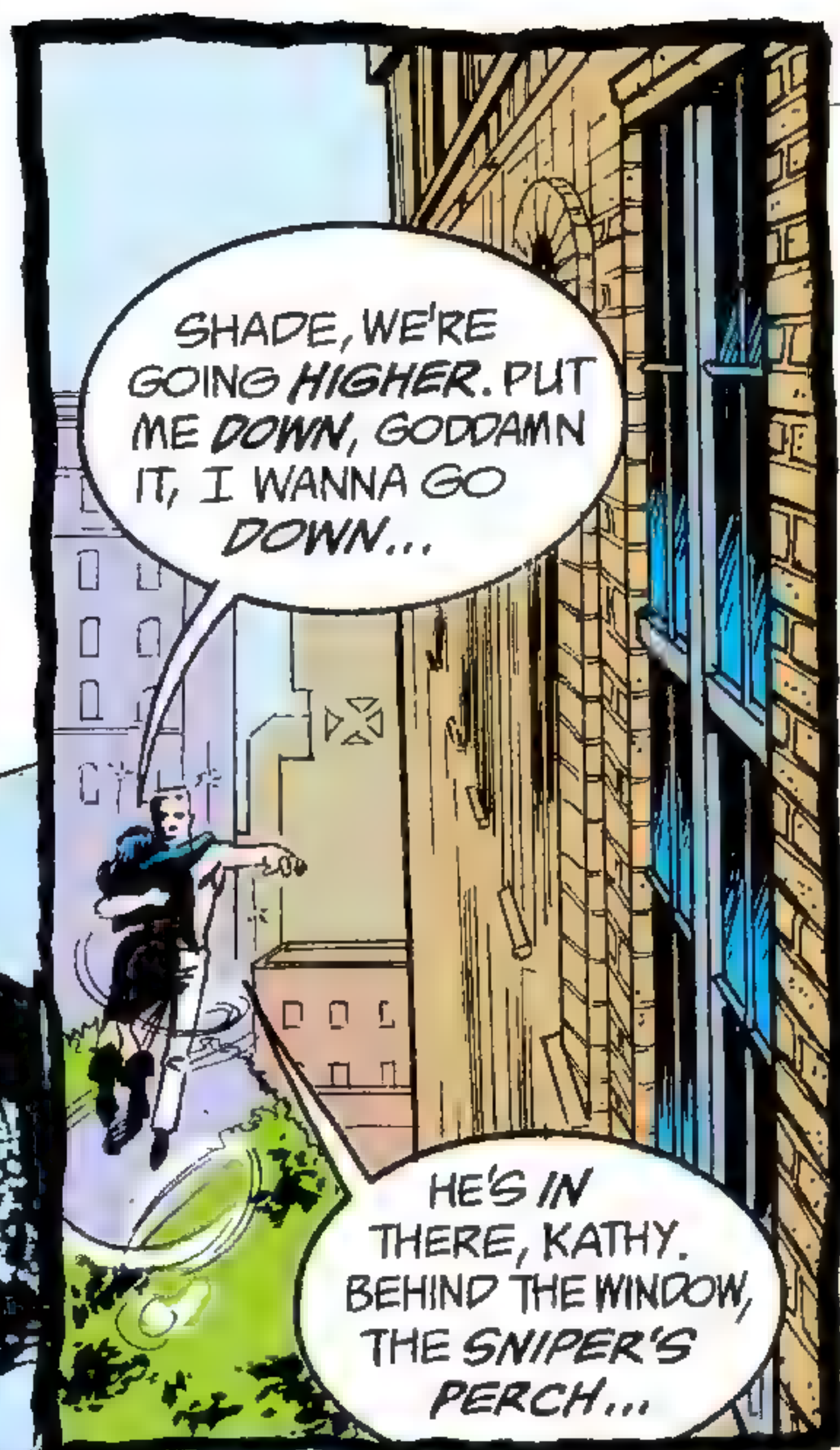
YES...COME ON. HARNESS
THE POWER OF THE MADNESS
VEST. THE **POWER OF
MADNESS**, THE POWER
TO CHANGE, TO **CHANGE**...

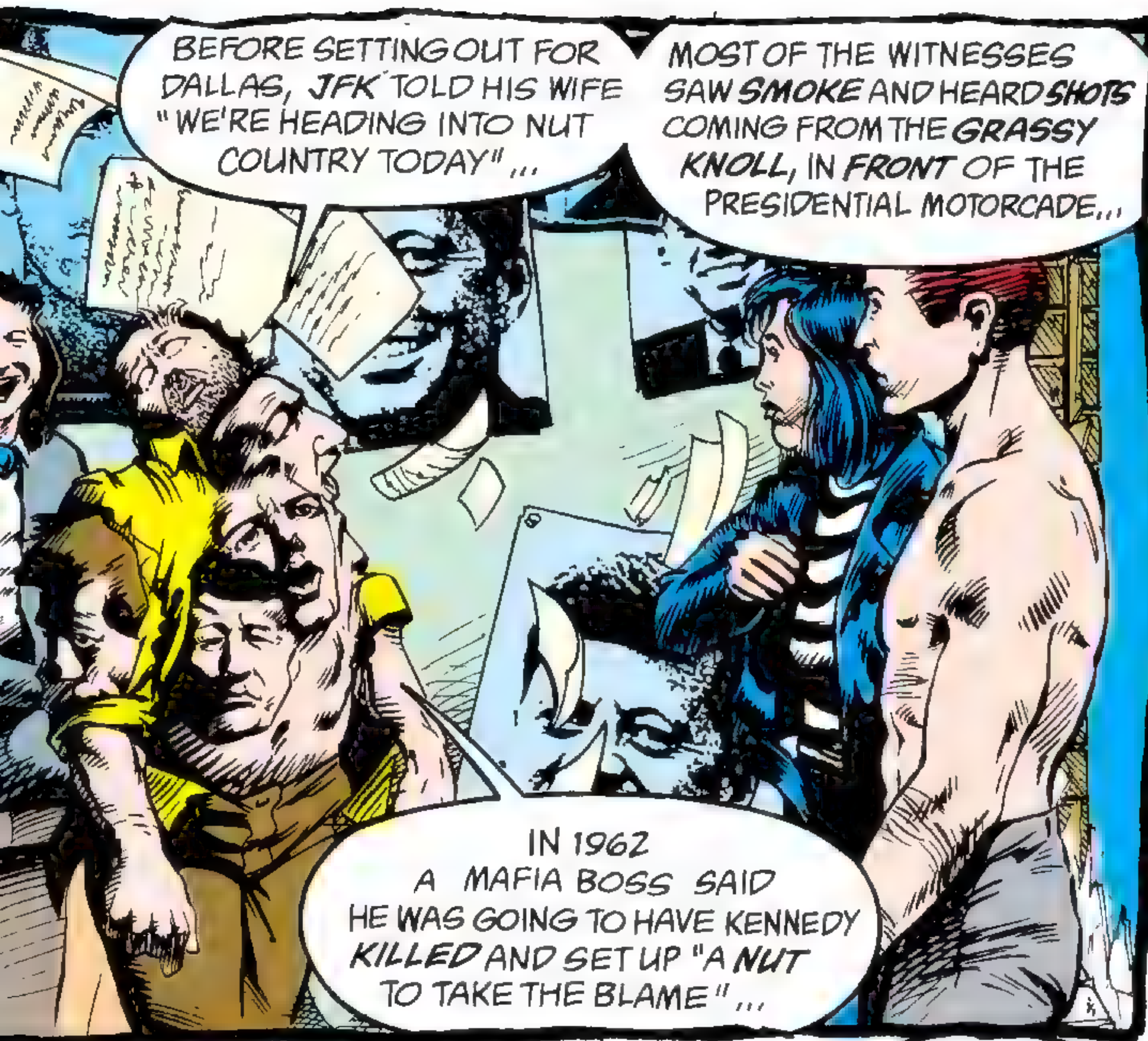
ABOVE US, THE MADNESS,
IT'S COMING FROM **THERE**.
I KNOW--HOW DO I KNOW?--
WHERE IT IS...



SIXTH FLOOR OF THE
TEXAS SCHOOL BOOK
DEPOSITORY...

THE **SNIPER'S PERCH**.





BEFORE SETTING OUT FOR DALLAS, JFK TOLD HIS WIFE "WE'RE HEADING INTO NUT COUNTRY TODAY" ...

MOST OF THE WITNESSES SAW SMOKE AND HEARD SHOTS COMING FROM THE GRASSY KNOLL, IN FRONT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL MOTORCADE...

IN 1962 A MAFIA BOSS SAID HE WAS GOING TO HAVE KENNEDY KILLED AND SET UP "A NUT TO TAKE THE BLAME" ...



THIS GUY LIVED JUST OUTSIDE NEW ORLEANS. LEE HARVEY OSWALD'S HOME TOWN...

WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

I DON'T KNOW. TRY TO CALM HIM DOWN, I GUESS...



LISTEN, I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT--

NO! GET AWAY! IT'S JACK RUBY. GET AWAY, RUBY...

IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT. IF YOU HADN'T KILLED OSWALD HE WOULD HAVE TOLD THE WHOLE STORY, I'D BE FREE!



I'M NOT RUBY... YOU'VE GOT TO STOP. YOU'RE MAKING ALL THIS HAPPEN, A MADNESS--

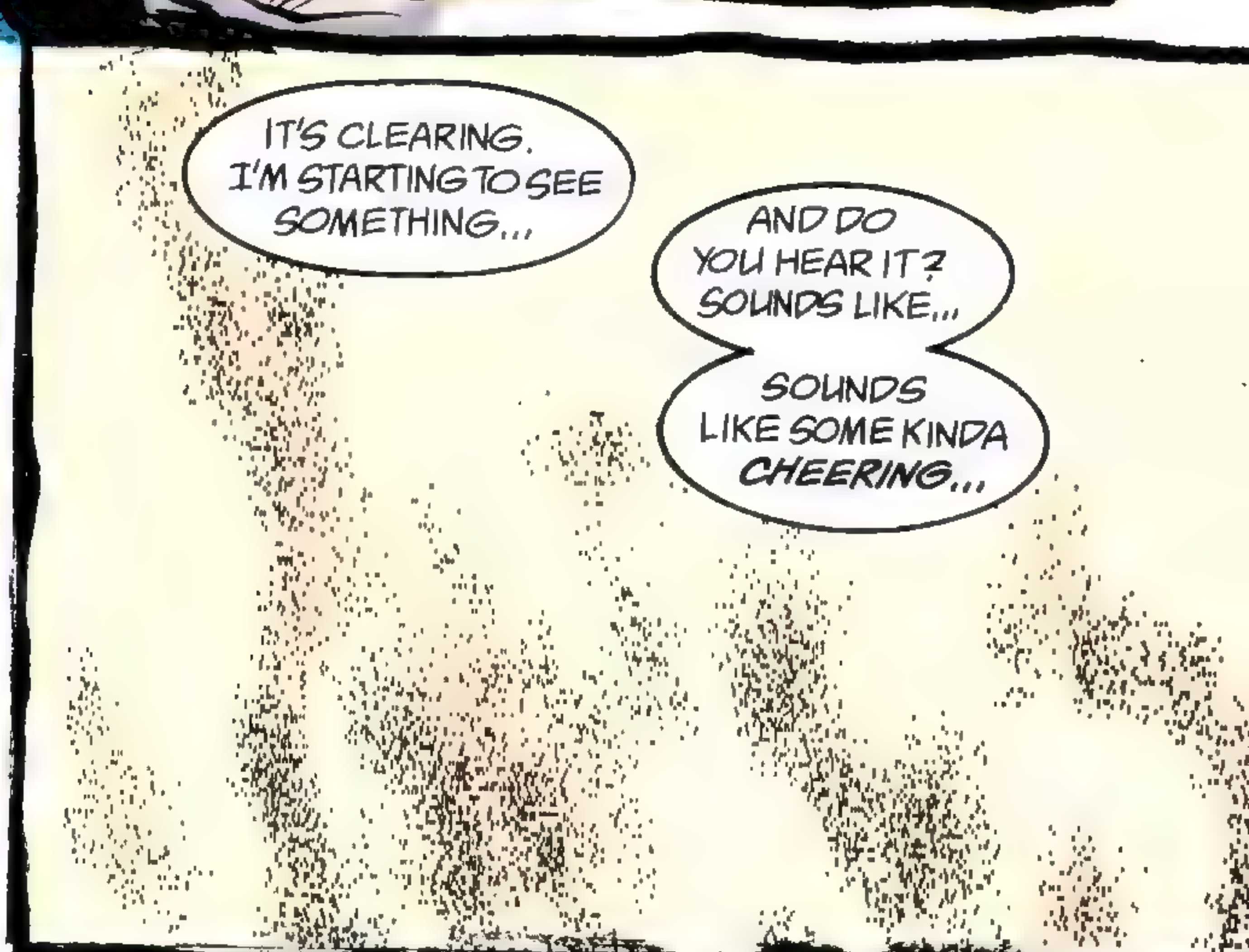


GET AWAY!



KATHY? KATHY, YOU THERE?

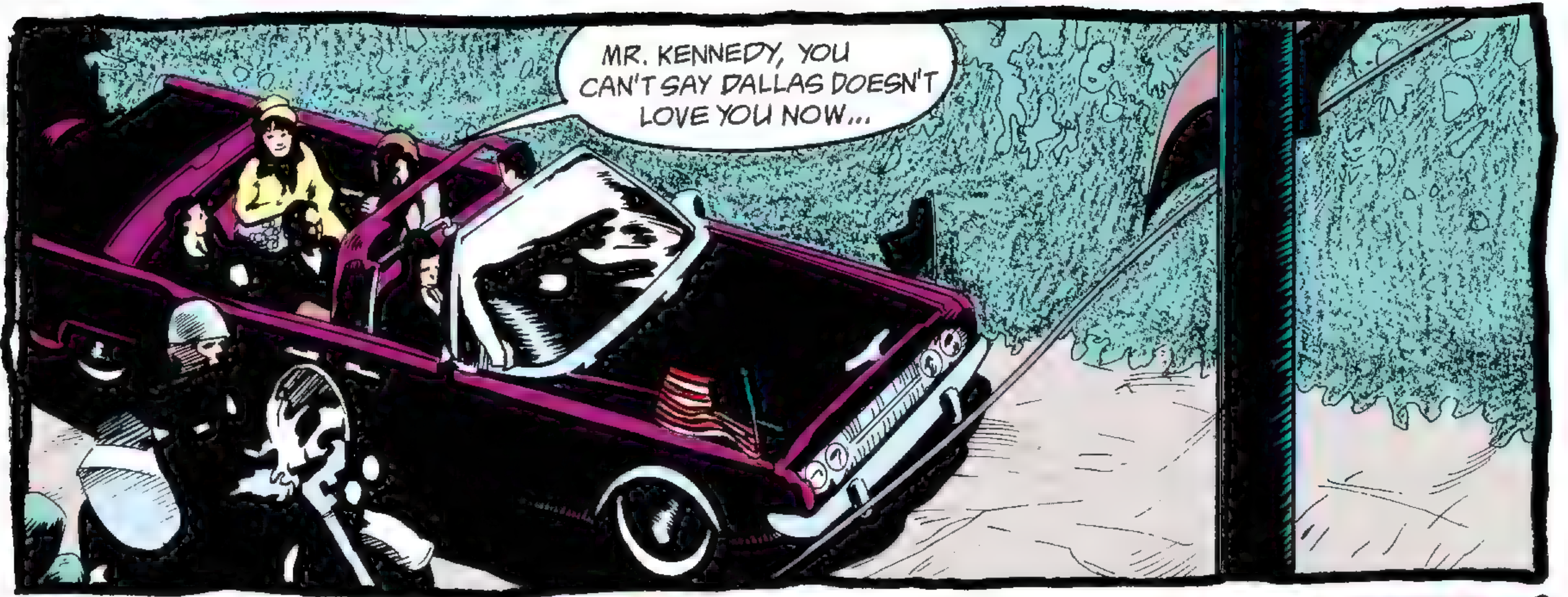
I THINK SO. WHAT'S HAPPENED? I CAN'T SEE ... MY EYES, THEY'RE BLINDED...

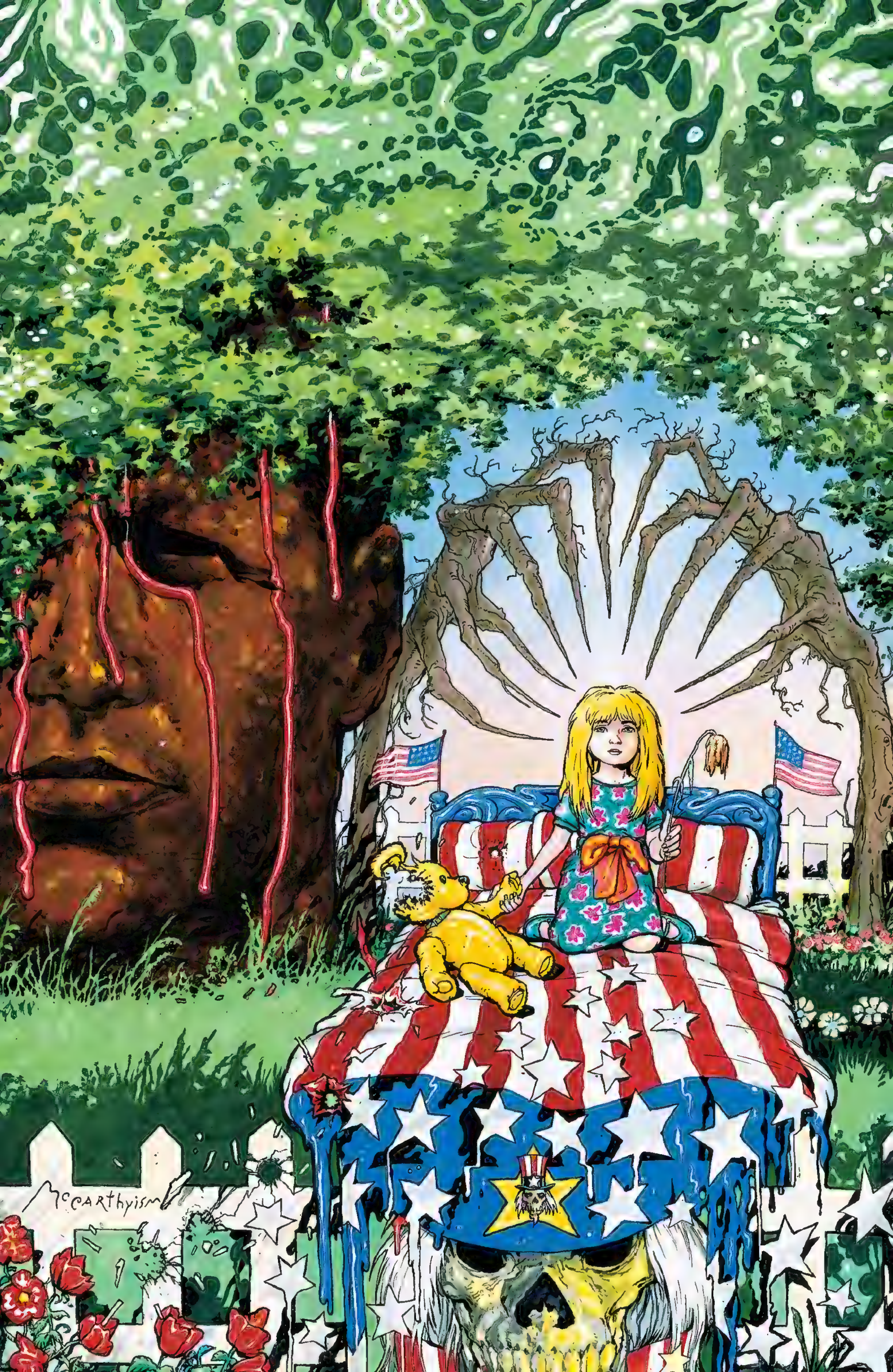


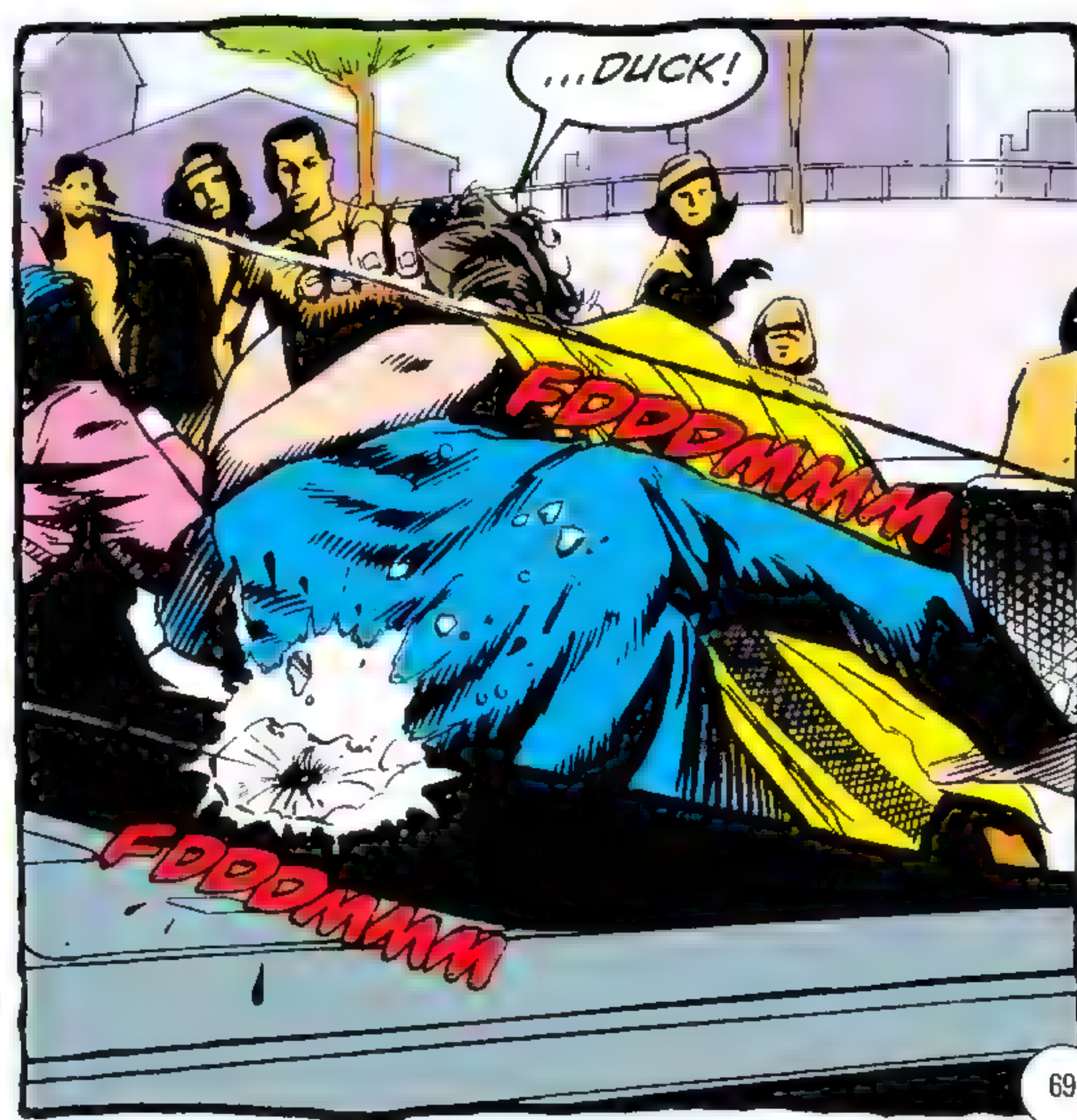
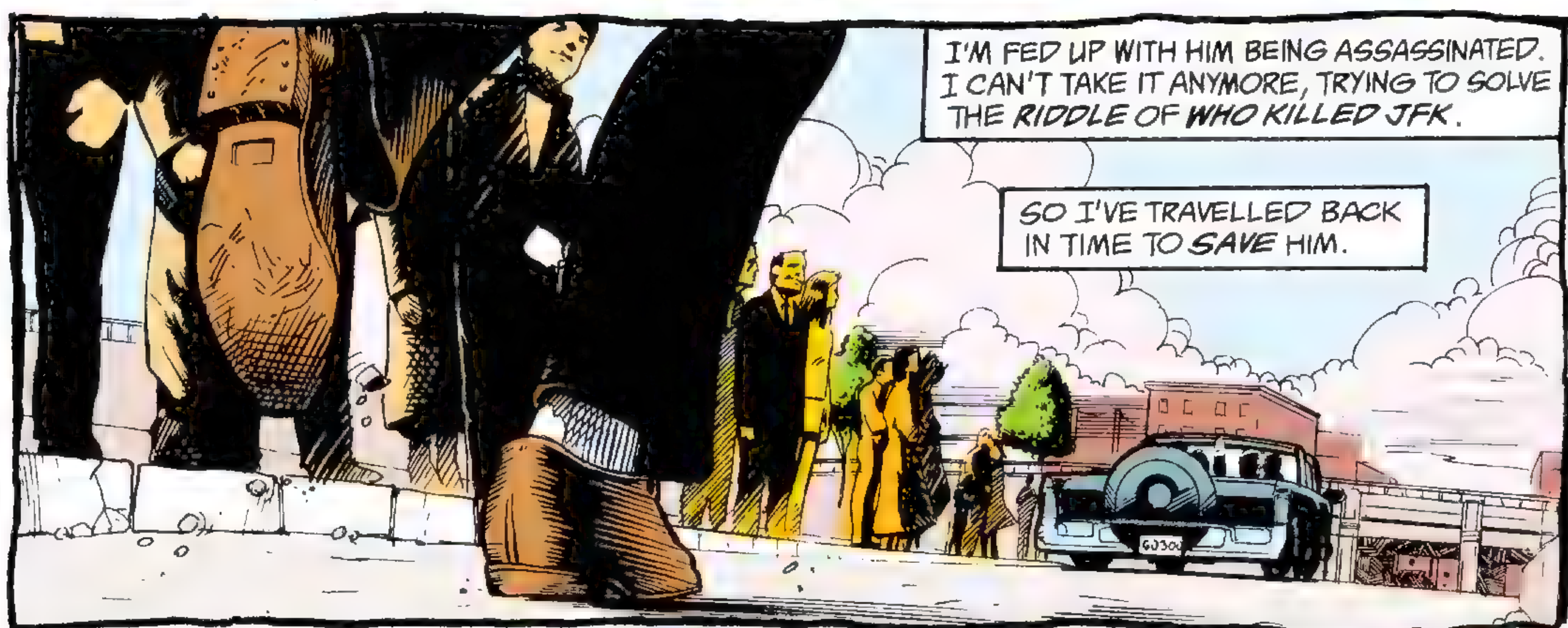
IT'S CLEARING. I'M STARTING TO SEE SOMETHING...

AND DO YOU HEAR IT? SOUNDS LIKE...

SOUNDS LIKE SOME KINDA CHEERING...









THE CAR ACCELERATES,
WHEELS SCREAMING, THE
SIRENS SCREAM TOO...

THERE'S BEEN AN ASSASSINATION
ATTEMPT ON THE PRESIDENT.

JFK HOLDS HIS BREATH FOR A
MOMENT, THEN RELAXES AND
SMILES AND SQUEEZES MY
HAND AND SAYS SIMPLY,
"THANK YOU."

WE CROUCH IN THE
CAR LIKE TWO SCHOOLKIDS,
LIKE TWO BROTHERS, AND
I FEEL A KIND OF
ONENESS WITH THE
GUY, A DEEP SPIRITUAL
BOND.

"YOU'RE TOO YOUNG
TO DIE, JACK," I SAY.

ALL THE PRESIDENTS' ASSASSINS!

PETER
MILLIGAN
WRITER

CHRIS
BACHALO
PENCILLER

MARK
PENNINGTON
INKER

DANIEL
VOZZO
COLORIST

TODD
KLEIN
LETTERER

TOM
PEYER
ASST. EDITOR

KAREN
BERGER
EDITOR

CREATED BY
STEVE
DITKO



CENTRAL DALLAS. JFK'S BEEN SCREAMING AT SECRET SERVICE GOONS FOR THIRTY MINUTES. THERE ARE GONNA BE SOME BALLS CHEWED OFF OVER THIS!

SURE, JACK. BUT IT'S FUNNY WHAT YOU SAID, "THEY'D" HAVE GOT ME. IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN *THEY*, THOUGH WE NEVER KNEW JUST *WHO THEY WERE*...

IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR YOU, DUANE, THEY'D HAVE GOT ME.

I'VE ORDERED A PLANE FOR WASHINGTON. I'D LIKE YOU TO COME, TOO.



I REMEMBER THE DAY YOU WERE SHOT. I WAS IN KANSAS CITY. A GUY RUNS OUT ONTO THE STREET AND YELLS TO THIS OTHER GUY.

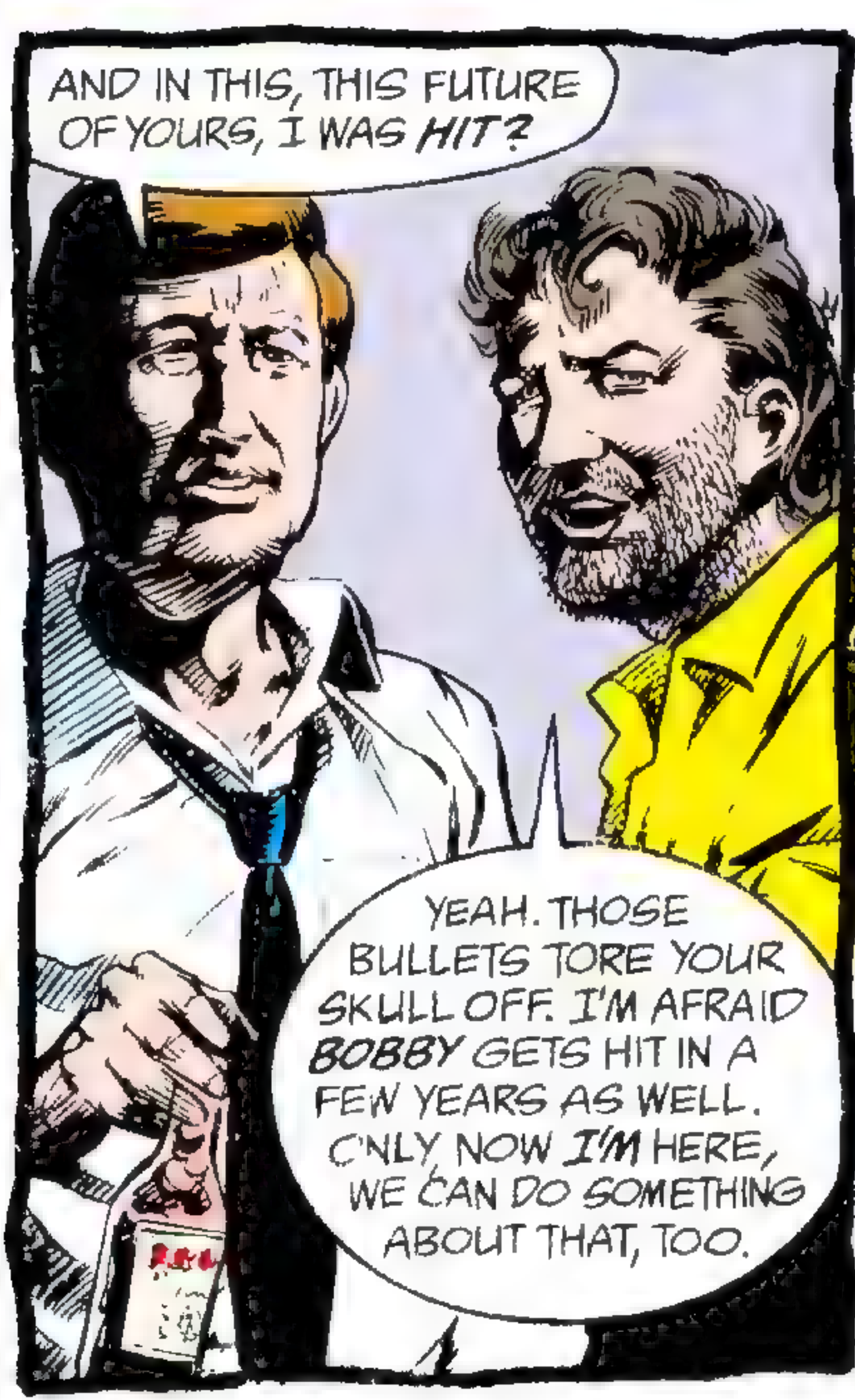
"THEY'VE GOT KENNEDY." *THEY'VE GOT KENNEDY.*



I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE EASY TO SWALLOW, JACK, BUT I WANT TO COME CLEAN. I'M FROM THE FUTURE. I'M DUANE TRILBY, FROM 1990.

I CAME BACK IN TIME. TO SAVE YOU.



AND IN THIS, THIS FUTURE OF YOURS, I WAS *HIT*?

YEAH. THOSE BULLETS TORE YOUR SKULL OFF. I'M AFRAID BOBBY GETS HIT IN A FEW YEARS AS WELL. ONLY NOW I'M HERE, WE CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT, TOO.



BOBBY? JESUS... AND WHAT ABOUT *TEDDY*? THEY GET TEDDY, TOO?

AHHH, NO. THEY DIDN'T NEED TO WIPE TEDDY OUT.

TEDDY WAS DOING A FINE JOB OF THAT HIMSELF.



BUT IT'S A LONG STORY. MAYBE WE'D BETTER FINISH IT ON THE PLANE TO WASHINGTON...

NIGHT. WASHINGTON. THE WHITE HOUSE BATHED IN LIGHTS. BEFORE VIETNAM, BEFORE WATERGATE, BEFORE CRACK, BEFORE AIDS, BEFORE MARY-ANN...

WARREN? THEY LET EARL WARREN HEAD THE COMMISSION INVESTIGATING MY ASSASSINATION? AND GERRY FORD WAS ON IT, TOO? BOY OH BOY...

HOW DID JACQUELINE TAKE IT?

BADLY, LIKE ANY WIFE WHO LOVES A HUSBAND WOULD DO. THEY SAY SHE NEVER GOT OVER IT. WAS ALWAYS BITTER...

DID SHE MARRY AGAIN? TELL ME THE TRUTH, DUANE.

AHHH, NO, JACK. SHE NEVER RE-MARRIED, THOUGH SHE HAD PLENTY OF OFFERS. ALL TYPES WERE AFTER HER, FROM FILM STARS TO SHIPPING MAGNATES...

OKAY, SO IT'S NOT EXACTLY THE TRUTH. WHY HURT A GUY WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE TO?

THAT SOUNDS LIKE HER. THERE'S STILL ONE THING I DON'T UNDERSTAND, THOUGH, DUANE. WHY WERE YOU SO OBSESSED WITH WHO KILLED ME?

I HAD A DAUGHTER. MARY-ANN. A BEAUTIFUL LITTLE GIRL, SO FULL OF LIFE... SO...

...SO PERFECT.

BUT SHE WASN'T PERFECT. SHE DIED WHEN SHE WAS SEVEN. SEVEN. HAD THIS HOLE IN HER HEART.

I WAS ALREADY WORKING ON A KENNEDY BOOK. IT BECAME MY WHOLE LIFE. I SUPPOSE WHILE I WAS TRYING TO SOLVE YOUR MYSTERY I COULD FORGET THE OTHER MYSTERY, THE MYSTERY I COULD NEVER SOLVE...

WHY DID MARY-ANN HAVE TO DIE?

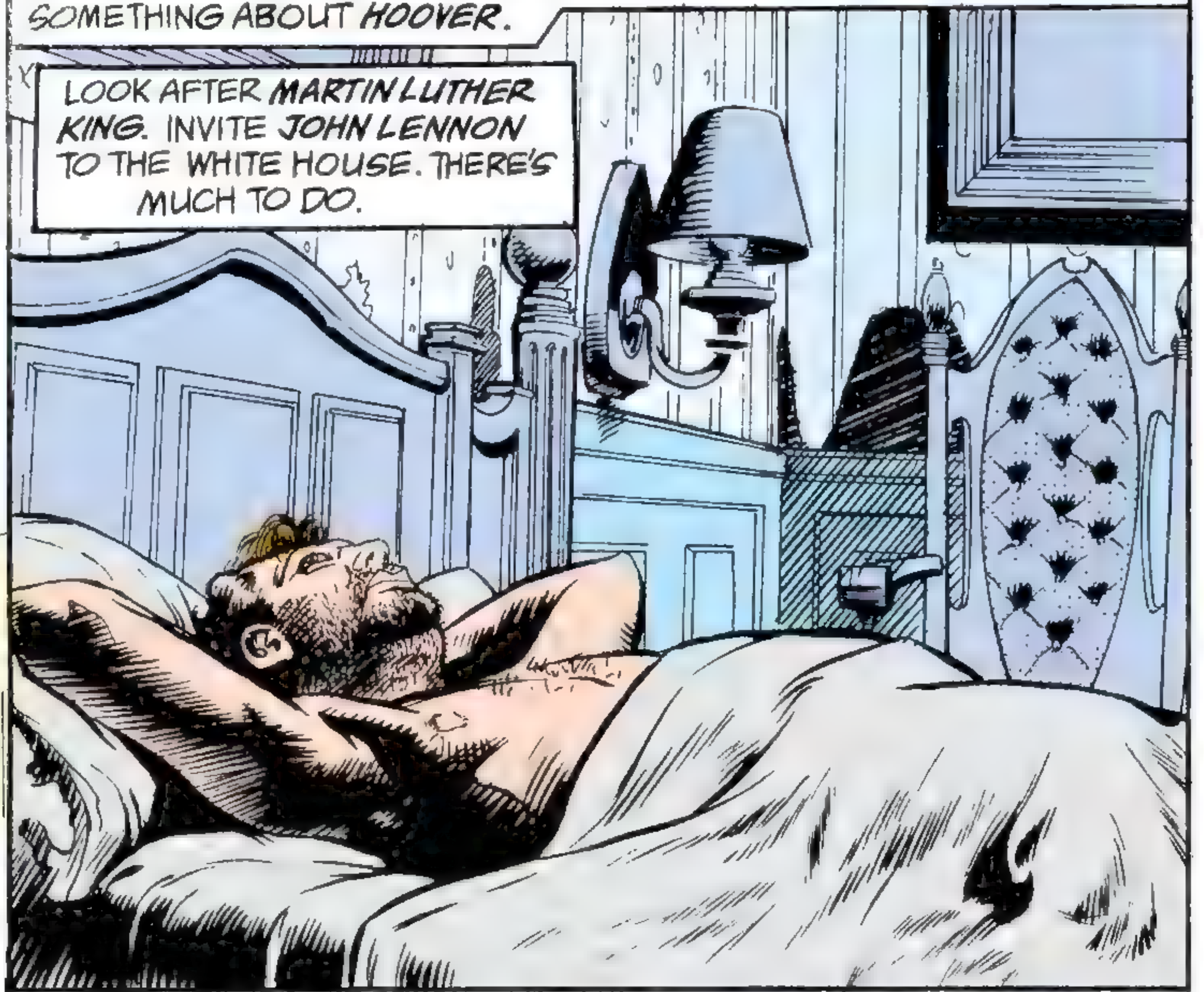
SO LIKE THE TWO GUYS WE ARE, WE CRY A LITTLE AND GET A LITTLE DRUNK AND ABOUT TWO IN THE MORNING HUG AND SAY GOODNIGHT.

WE'RE NOT SO DISSIMILAR, JFK AND ME. BOTH KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO HURT.



I'M GIVEN A SUITE IN THE WHITE HOUSE. THIS IS A NEW LIFE. I'LL BE JFK'S GURU. I'LL TELL HIM TO ROUND UP JACK RUBY AND TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT HOOVER.

LOOK AFTER MARTIN LUTHER KING. INVITE JOHN LENNON TO THE WHITE HOUSE. THERE'S MUCH TO DO.

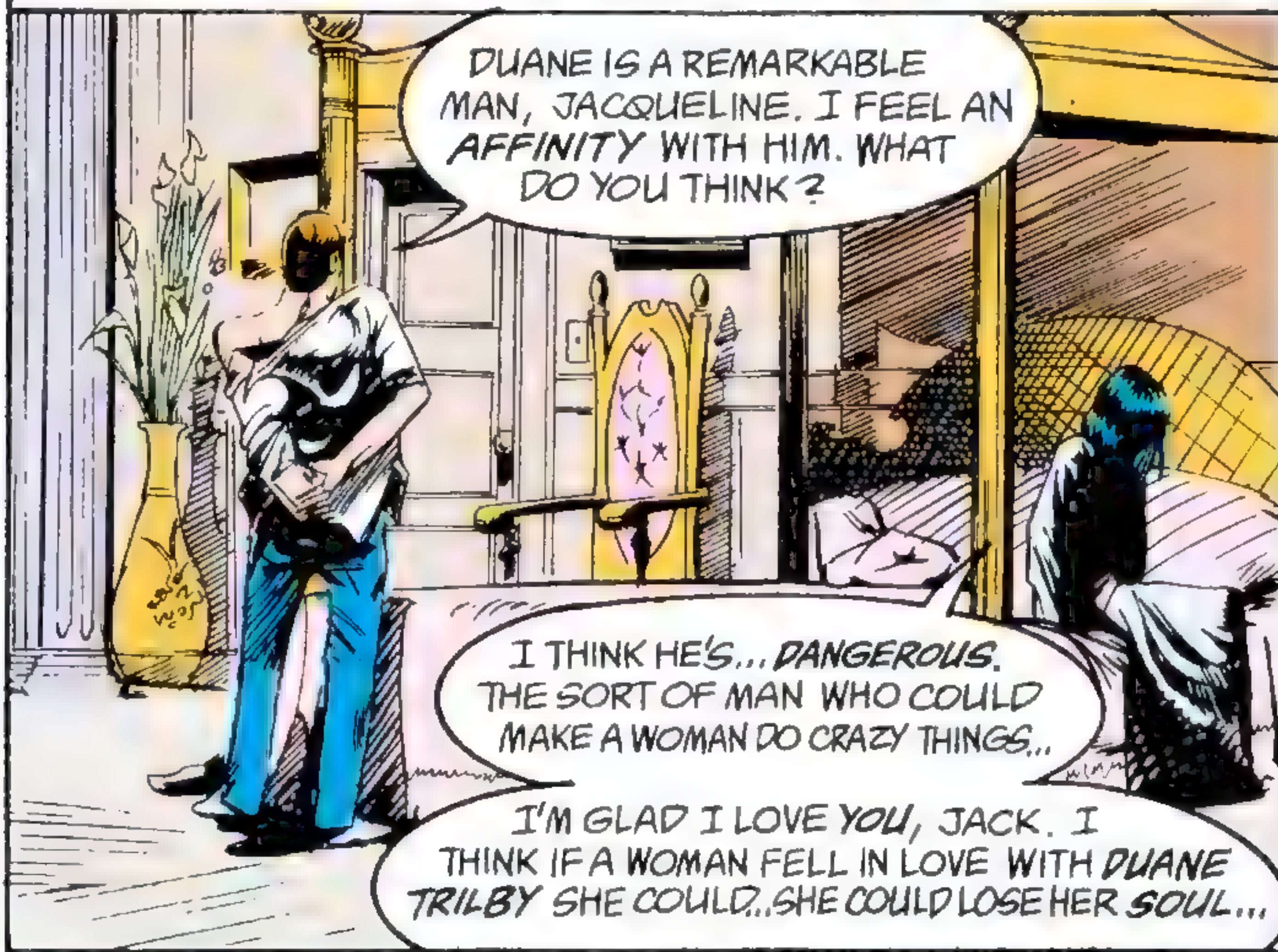


JFK GOES TO HIS WIFE, WHO'D BE A WIDOW IF IT WEREN'T FOR ME, WHOSE DRESS WOULD NOW BE COVERED IN BLOOD AND BRAINS...

DUANE IS A REMARKABLE MAN, JACQUELINE. I FEEL AN AFFINITY WITH HIM. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

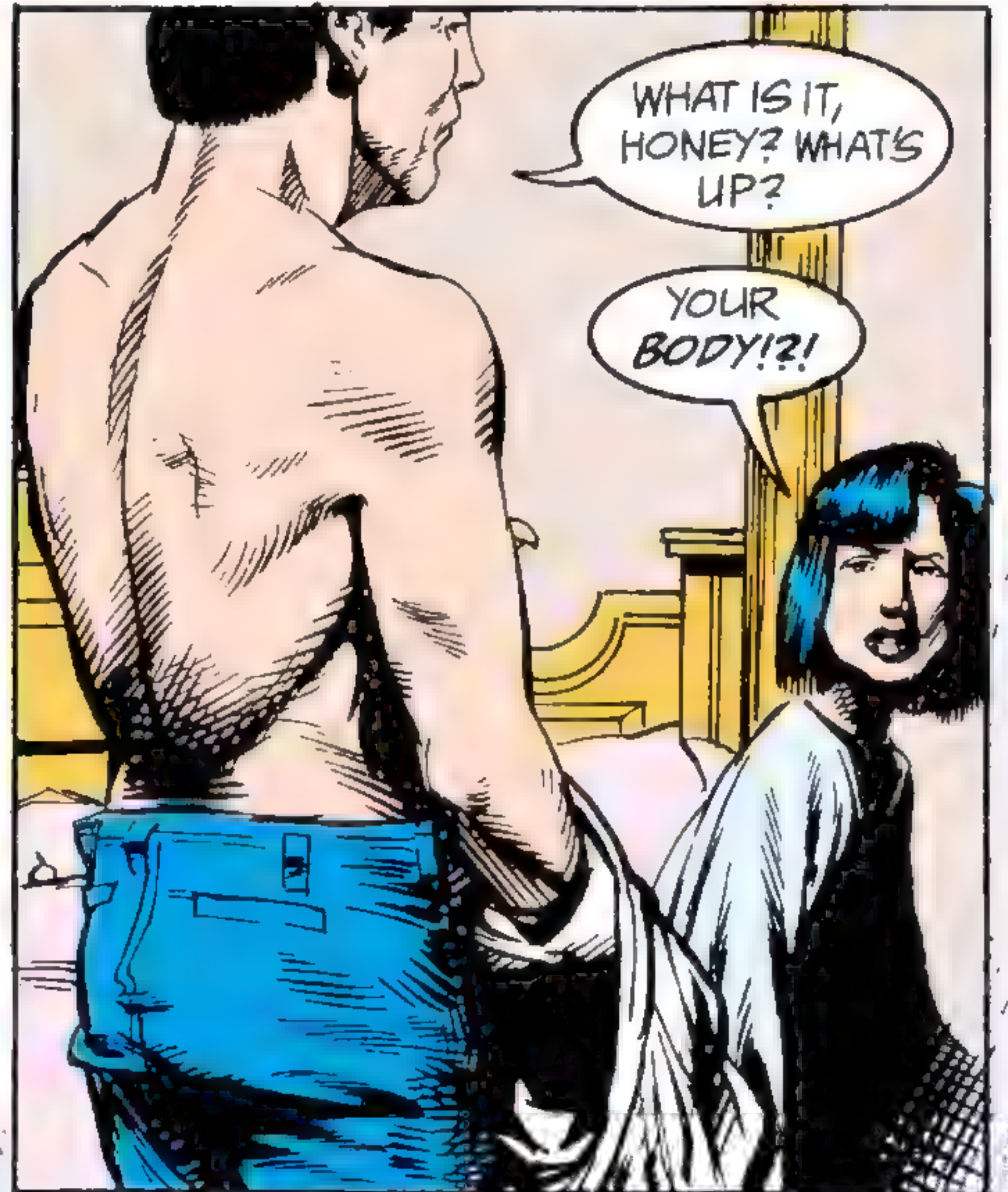
I THINK HE'S... DANGEROUS. THE SORT OF MAN WHO COULD MAKE A WOMAN DO CRAZY THINGS...

I'M GLAD I LOVE YOU, JACK. I THINK IF A WOMAN FELL IN LOVE WITH DUANE TRILBY SHE COULD... SHE COULD LOSE HER SOUL...



WHAT IS IT, HONEY? WHAT'S UP?

YOUR BODY!?!



NO, NO, NO. NOT LIKE THIS. IT DOESN'T HAPPEN LIKE THIS...

MY GOD, I... KATHY... I...

KATHY? WHO'S KATHY?

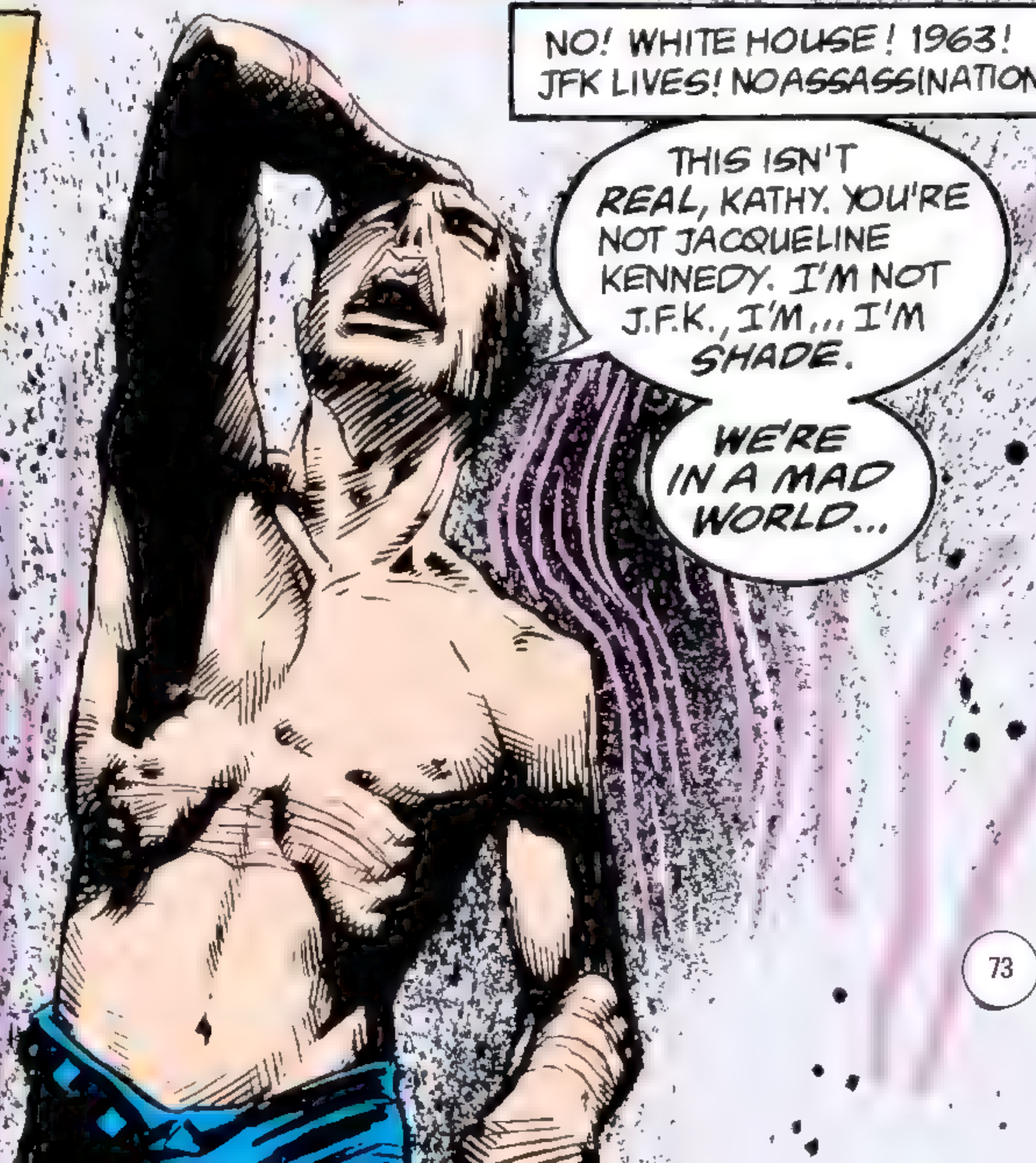
YOU ARE... I'M NOT... I'M NOT...

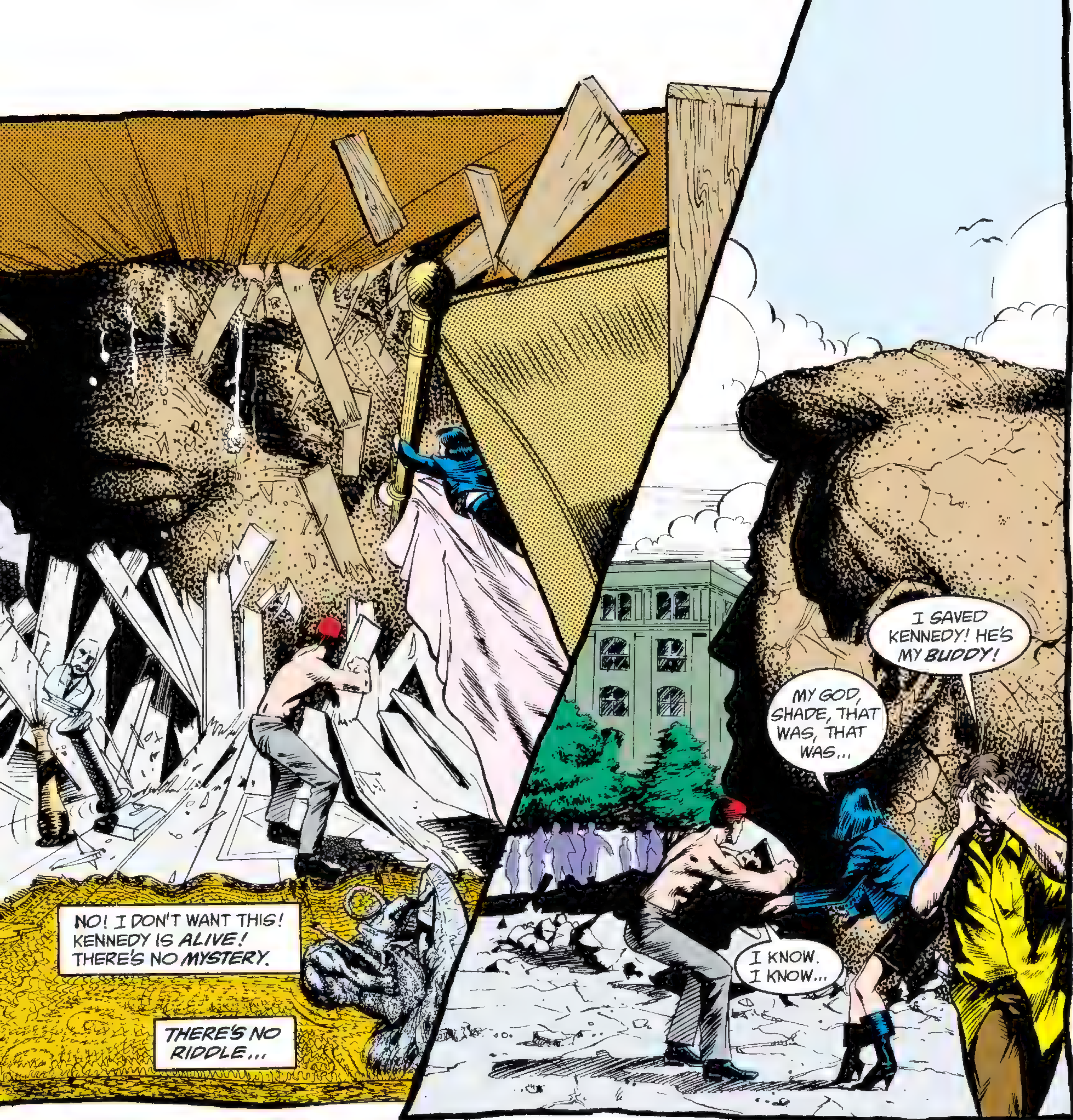


NO! WHITE HOUSE! 1963! JFK LIVES! NO ASSASSINATION!

THIS ISN'T REAL, KATHY. YOU'RE NOT JACQUELINE KENNEDY. I'M NOT J.F.K., I'M... I'M SHADE.

WE'RE IN A MAD WORLD...





NO! I DON'T WANT THIS!
KENNEDY IS ALIVE!
THERE'S NO MYSTERY.

THERE'S NO
RIDDLE...

I SAVED
KENNEDY! HE'S
MY BUDDY!

MY GOD,
SHADE, THAT
WAS, THAT
WAS...

I KNOW.
I KNOW...

THAT WAS THE WEIRDEST
EXPERIENCE OF MY LIFE! I
WAS COMPLETELY TAKEN IN.
I FELT AS MUCH JACQUELINE
KENNEDY AS I DO MYSELF.
NOW...

MAYBE YOU'RE NOT YOURSELF
NOW. MAYBE KATHY GEORGE
IS PART OF THIS MADNESS,
TOO...

OH GOD,
THAT'S NOT
TRUE, IS
IT?

NO. NO...

I'M ALMOST
POSITIVE WE'RE
REAL NOW.



WHO
KILLED
JFK?

WHO
KILLED
JFK?

UHHHH...

LEE
HARVEY
OSWALD?...



KATHY!



WHO KILLED JFK? WHO KILLED
MARY-ANN? ROMANTIC AMERICA'S
DEAD AND GONE, IT'S WITH
THEM BOTH IN THEIR
GRAVES...

TRILBY, DO
SOMETHING! YOU'RE
MAKING THIS HAPPEN.
STOP IT. GET THE GIRL
OUT OF THE SPHINX...



I DIDN'T
SHOOT ANYBODY,
NO SIR. I'M JUST
A PATSY IN
THIS...

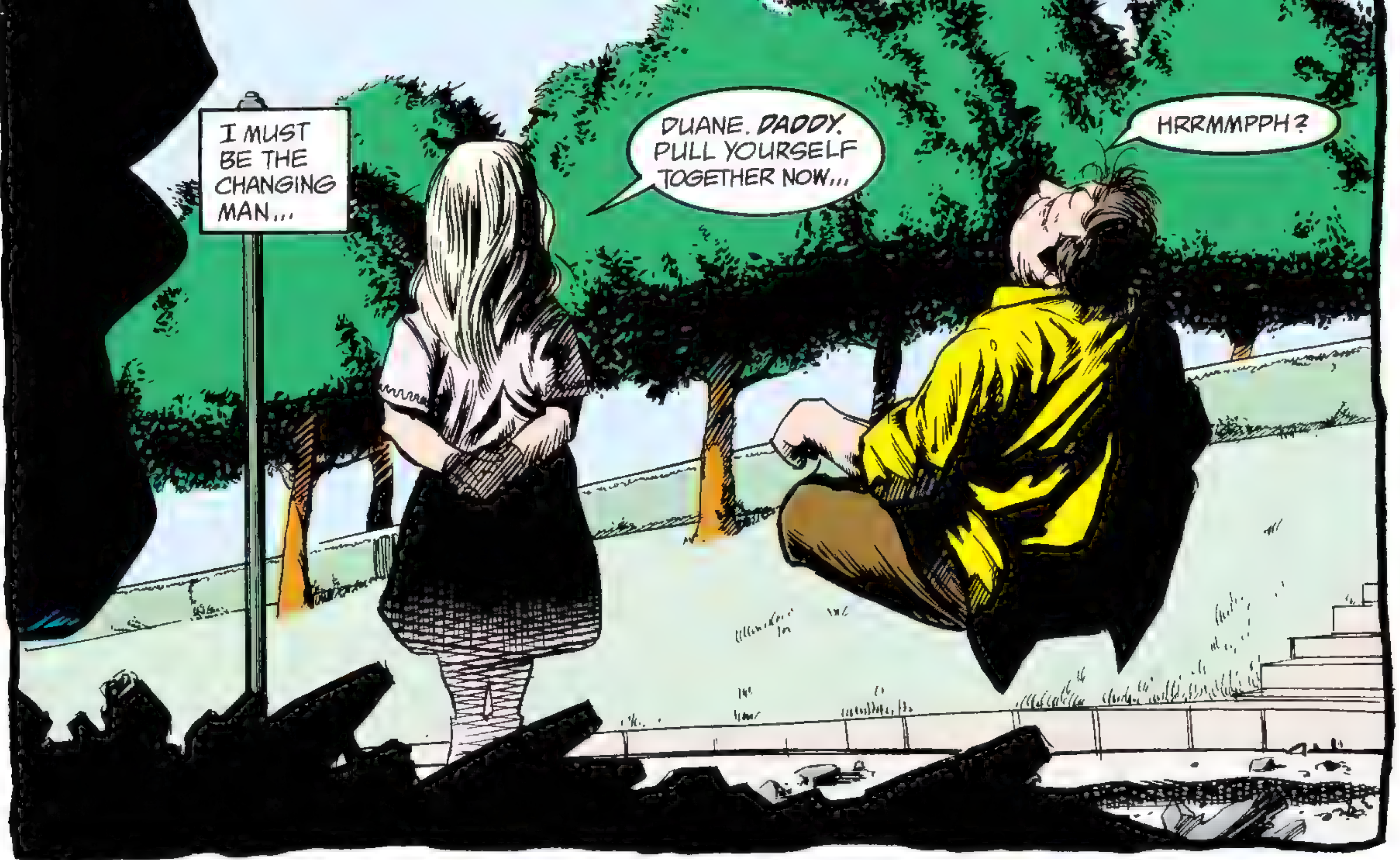


NO GOOD TALKING
TO HIM. TO BEAT
HIM I'VE GOT TO
ENTER HIS WORLD...

I HAVE TO ENTER
THE MADNESS...



I MUST BE PLASTIC. I MUST
TRANPOSE MYSELF INTO A NEW
AND MAD VIEW OF REALITY.



AND THEN THE WORLD LURCHES, LIKE MY STOMACH. I HAVE TO HOLD ONTO THE COP TO STOP FALLING. A PIECE OF HIS LUNG OR SOMETHING SPILLS OVER ME.

WE'RE ON A KIND OF CONVEYOR BELT. I MUSTN'T THROW UP, NOT YET...

THE COP MUST'VE GOT CHEWED BY THE SPHINX'S TEETH ON THE WAY IN...

GUESS I'M JUST LUCKY, HUH?

DAMN, I NEED A DRINK. I NEED TWENTY DRINKS.

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?

CLIKK

CLIKK

CLIKK

CLIKK

FDMMM

FDMMM

FDMMM

OH MY GOD.

A SHOOTING GALLERY.



I RECOGNIZE THIS PLACE. ELM STREET, DEALEY PLAZA. BUT EVERYTHING'S STANDING STILL.

THE FROZEN MOMENT BEFORE JFK WAS ASSASSINATED.

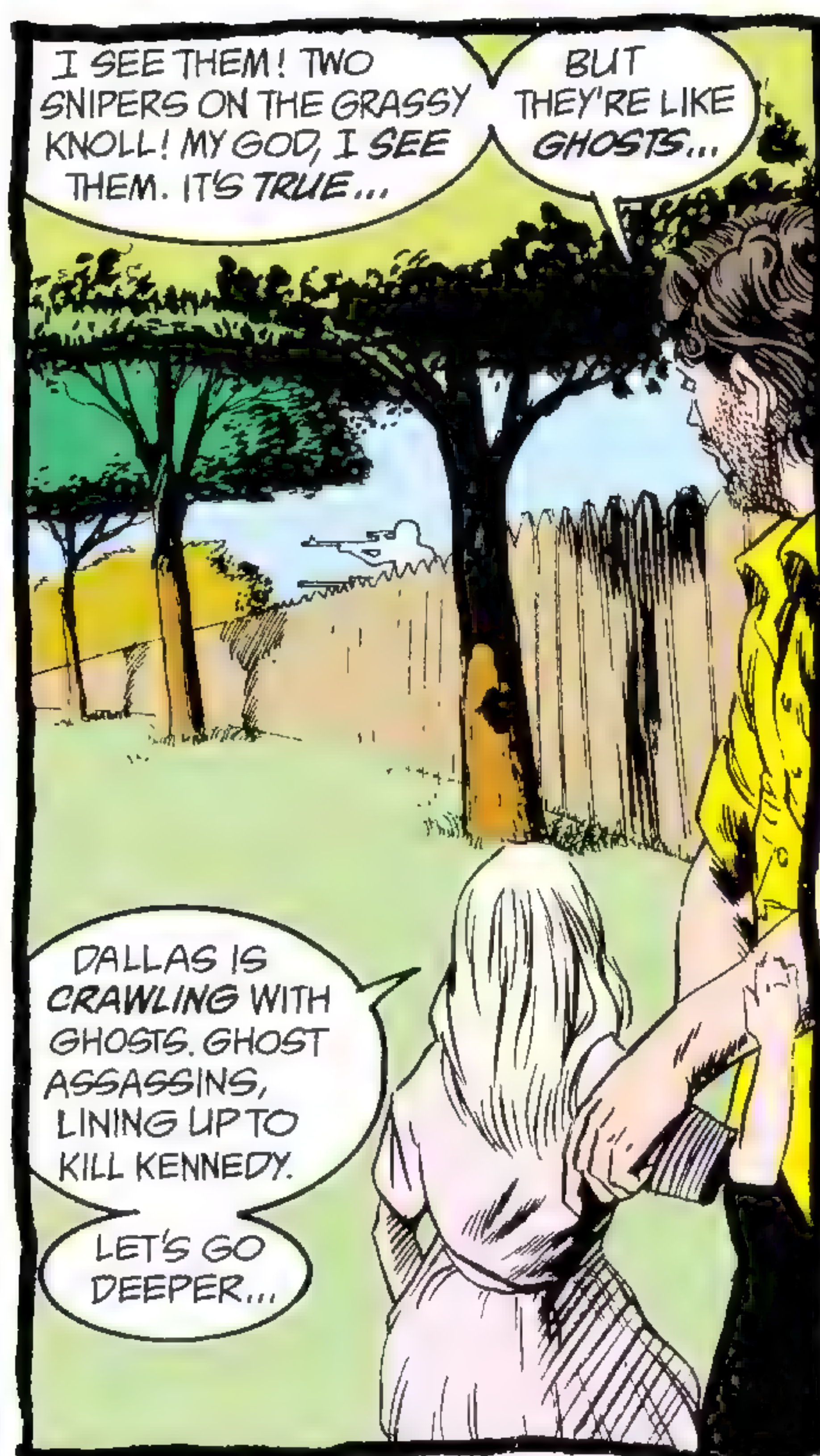


MARY-ANN, SWEETHEART, I DON'T CARE ABOUT THIS STUFF ANYMORE.

WHY DON'T WE JUST GO OFF, YOU AND ME. I'LL BUY YOU A SODA AND WE CAN TALK ABOUT WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO NOW WE'RE *TOGETHER* AGAIN...

NO. FIRST YOU HAVE TO GET RID OF THE SPHINX.

LOOK...



I SEE THEM! TWO SNIPERS ON THE GRASSY KNOLL! MY GOD, I SEE THEM. IT'S TRUE...

BUT THEY'RE LIKE GHOSTS...

DALLAS IS CRAWLING WITH GHOSTS. GHOST ASSASSINS, LINING UP TO KILL KENNEDY.

LET'S GO DEEPER...



DON'T TELL ME. THEY'RE *CORSICAN HITMEN*, HIRED BY THE MOB TO GET RID OF JFK, AND EMASCULATE ATTORNEY-GENERAL BOBBY.

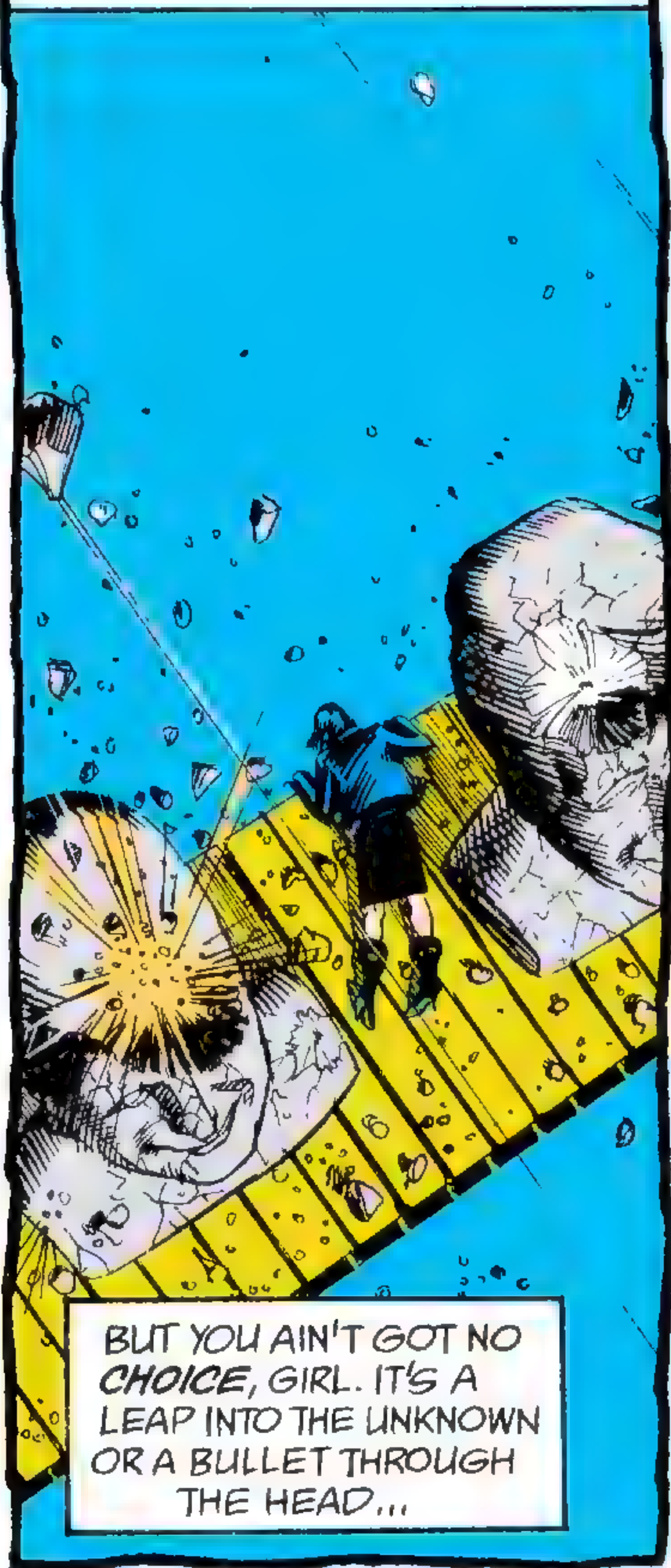
HEH HEH. AT LAST. THE TRUTH. THE MOB KILLED JFK...

BUT THERE'S MORE THAN JUST *ONE* TRUTH. THERE'S MORE THAN JUST *ONE* PAST. THIS ONE JUST HAS THE GREATEST TENDENCY TO EXIST...



THE PAST IS A BRANCH, FORKING THROUGH AND OUT FROM DALLAS. THERE'S MORE THAN ONE TRUTH, MORE THAN ONE ASSASSIN. BUT BEHIND THEM ALL IS THE SAME HAND, THE SHADOW OF THE *SAME CREATURE*... LET'S GO DEEPER STILL...

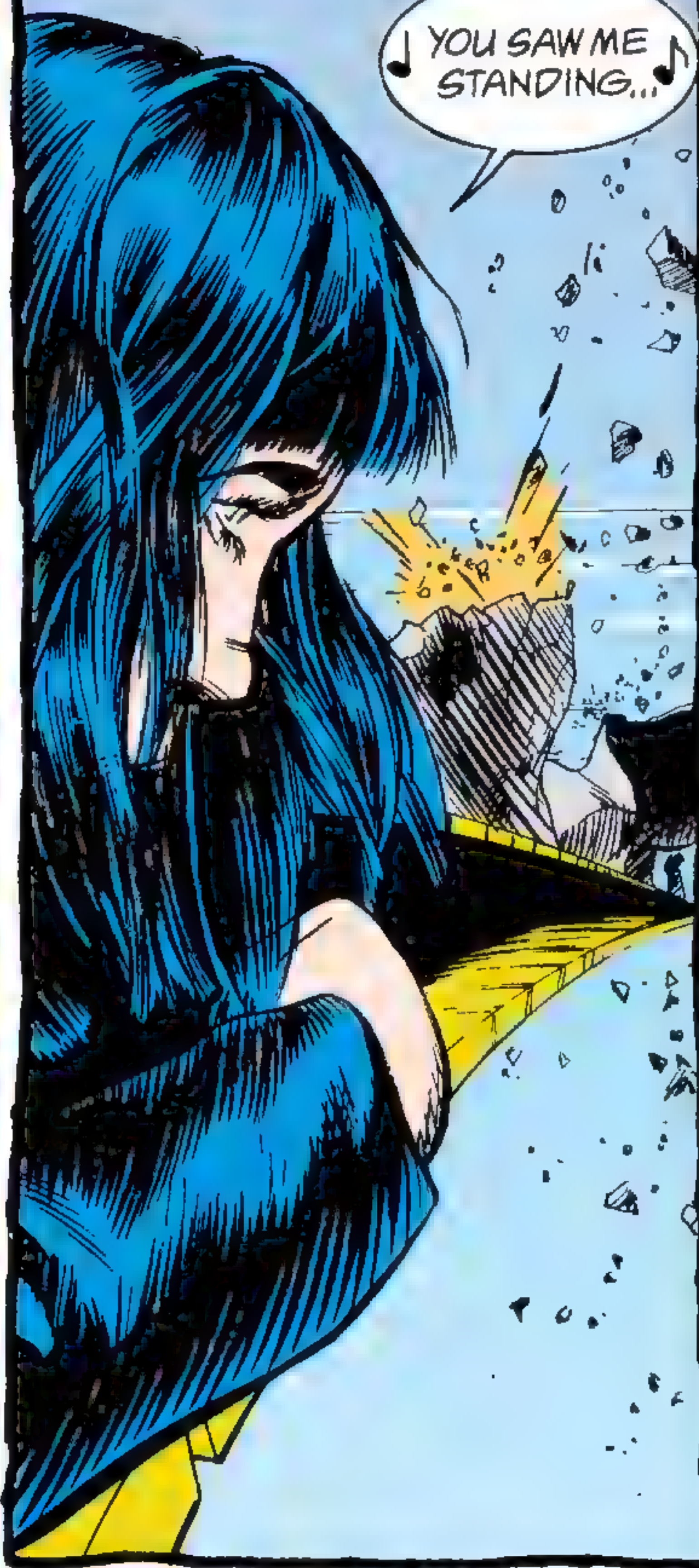
CAN'T SEE A THING DOWN THERE.
JUST BLUE, BOTTOMLESS BLUE...



BUT YOU AIN'T GOT NO
CHOICE, GIRL. IT'S A
LEAP INTO THE UNKNOWN
OR A BULLET THROUGH
THE HEAD...

♪ BLUE MOON... ♪

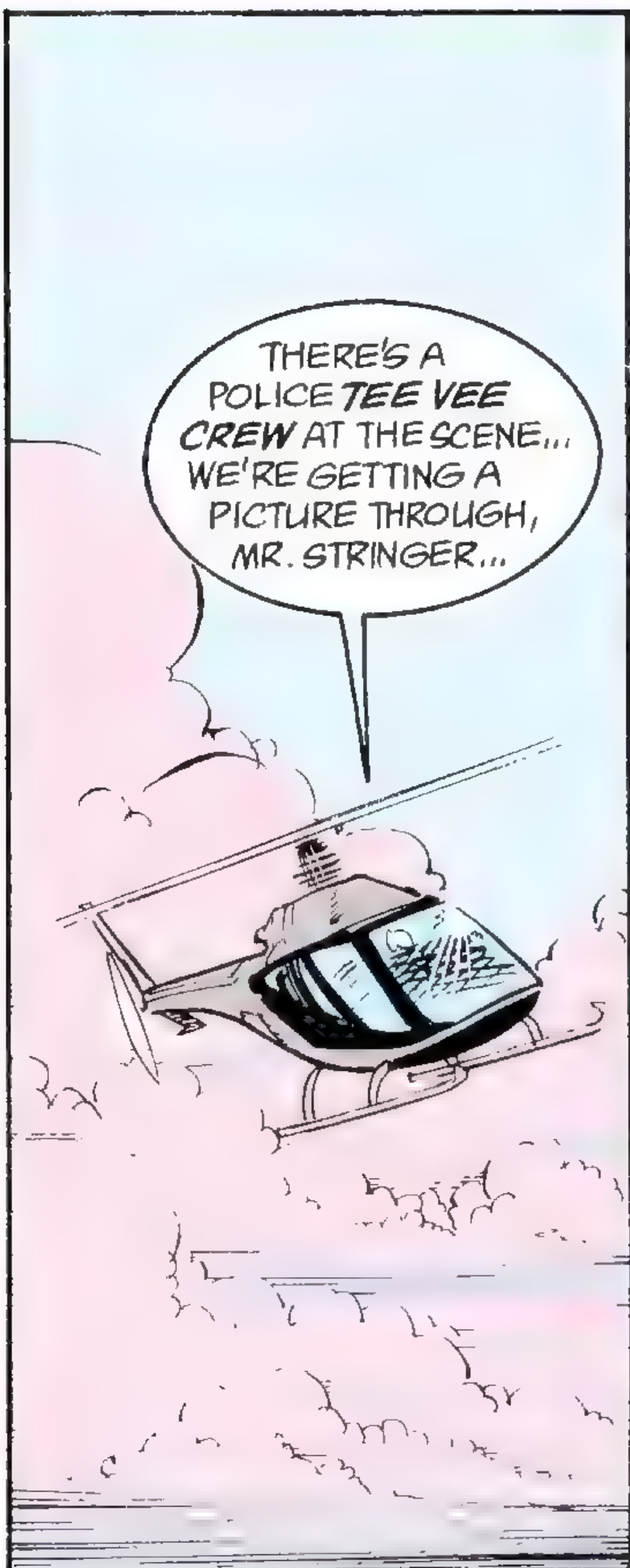
♪ YOU SAW ME
STANDING... ♪



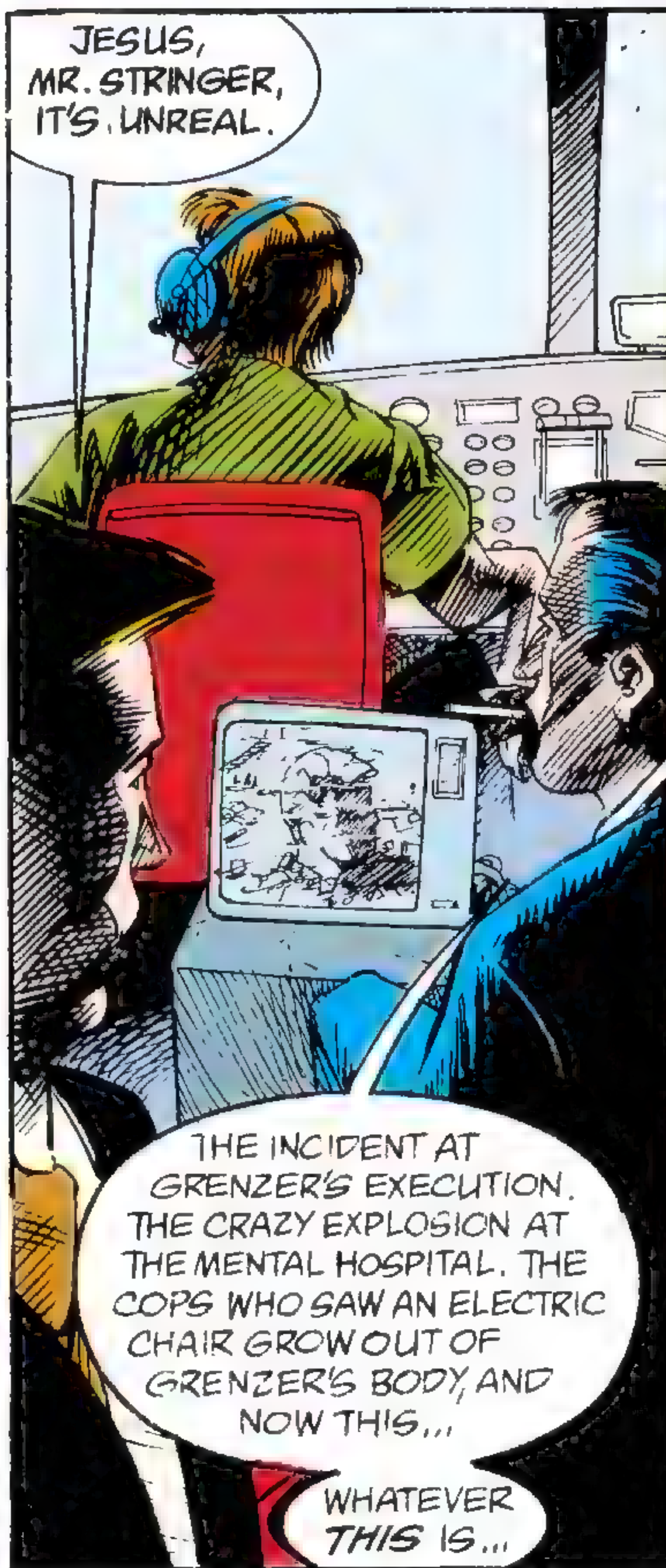
♪ ...ALONE... ♪



THERE'S A
POLICE TEE VEE
CREW AT THE SCENE...
WE'RE GETTING A
PICTURE THROUGH,
MR. STRINGER...



JESUS,
MR. STRINGER,
IT'S UNREAL.



THE INCIDENT AT
GRENZER'S EXECUTION.
THE CRAZY EXPLOSION AT
THE MENTAL HOSPITAL. THE
COPS WHO SAW AN ELECTRIC
CHAIR GROW OUT OF
GRENZER'S BODY, AND
NOW THIS...

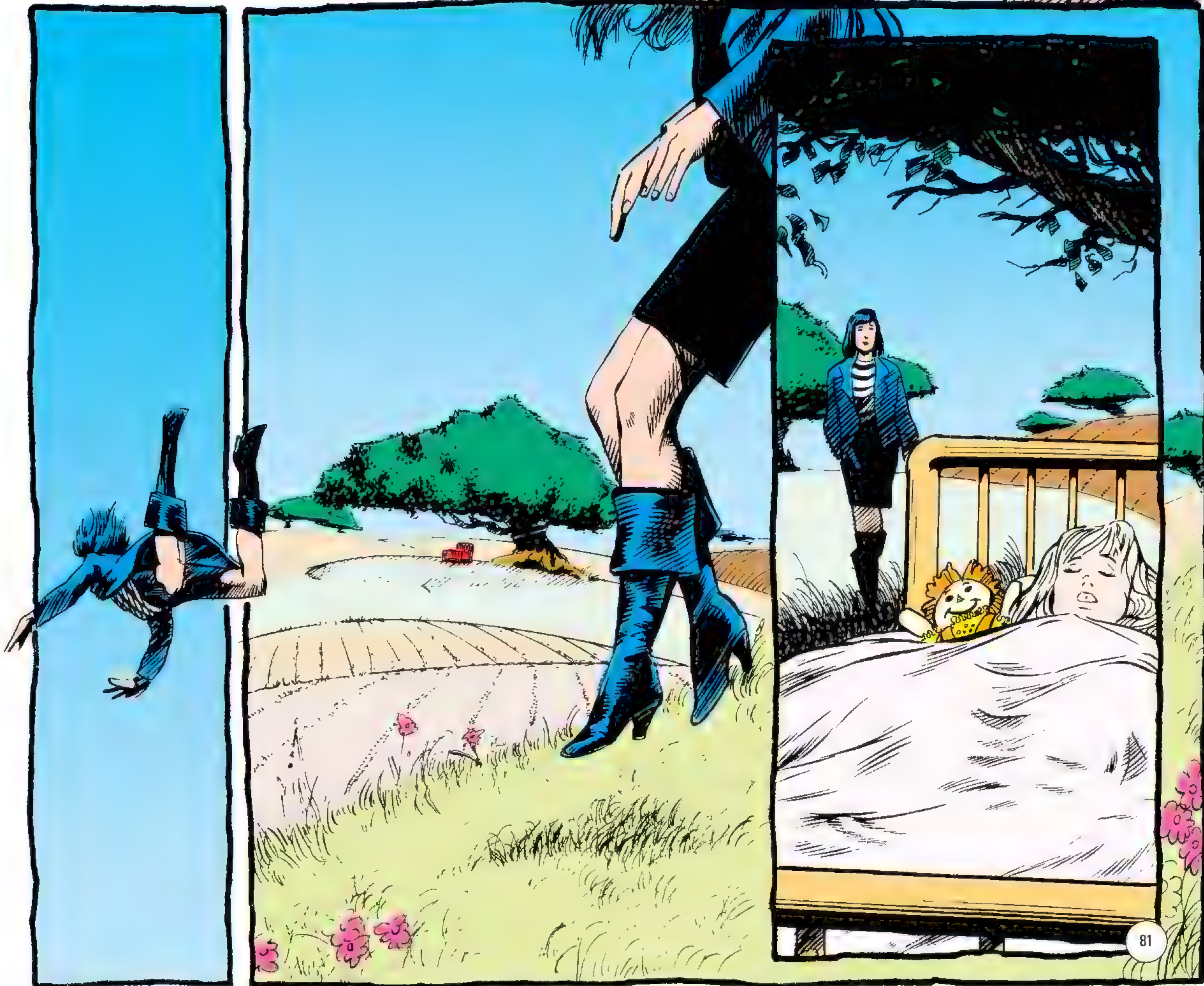
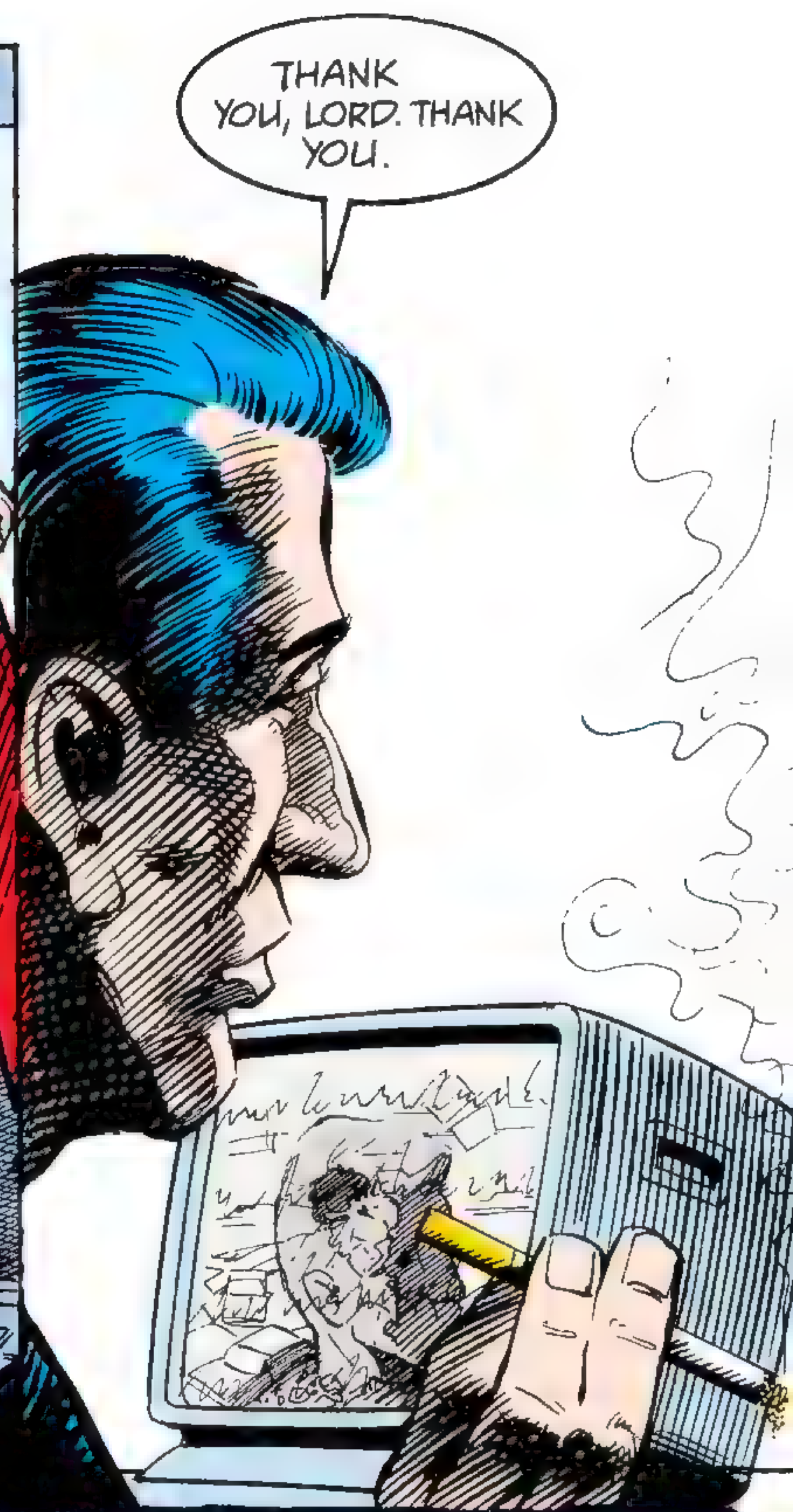
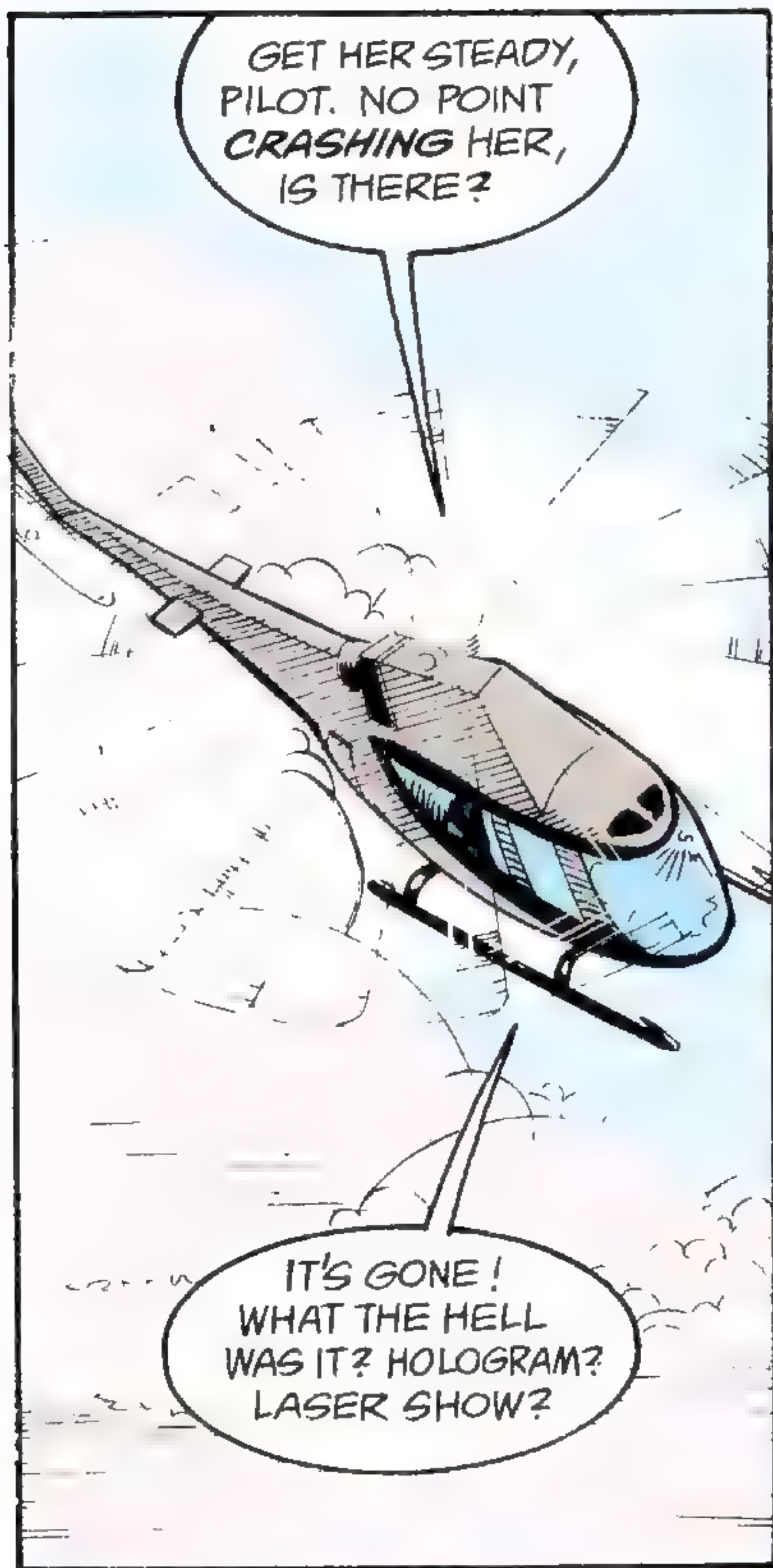
WHATEVER
THIS IS...

JESUS,
PILOT... WHAT'S
HAPPENING?

OVER THERE!
MY GOD, LOOK
AT IT...



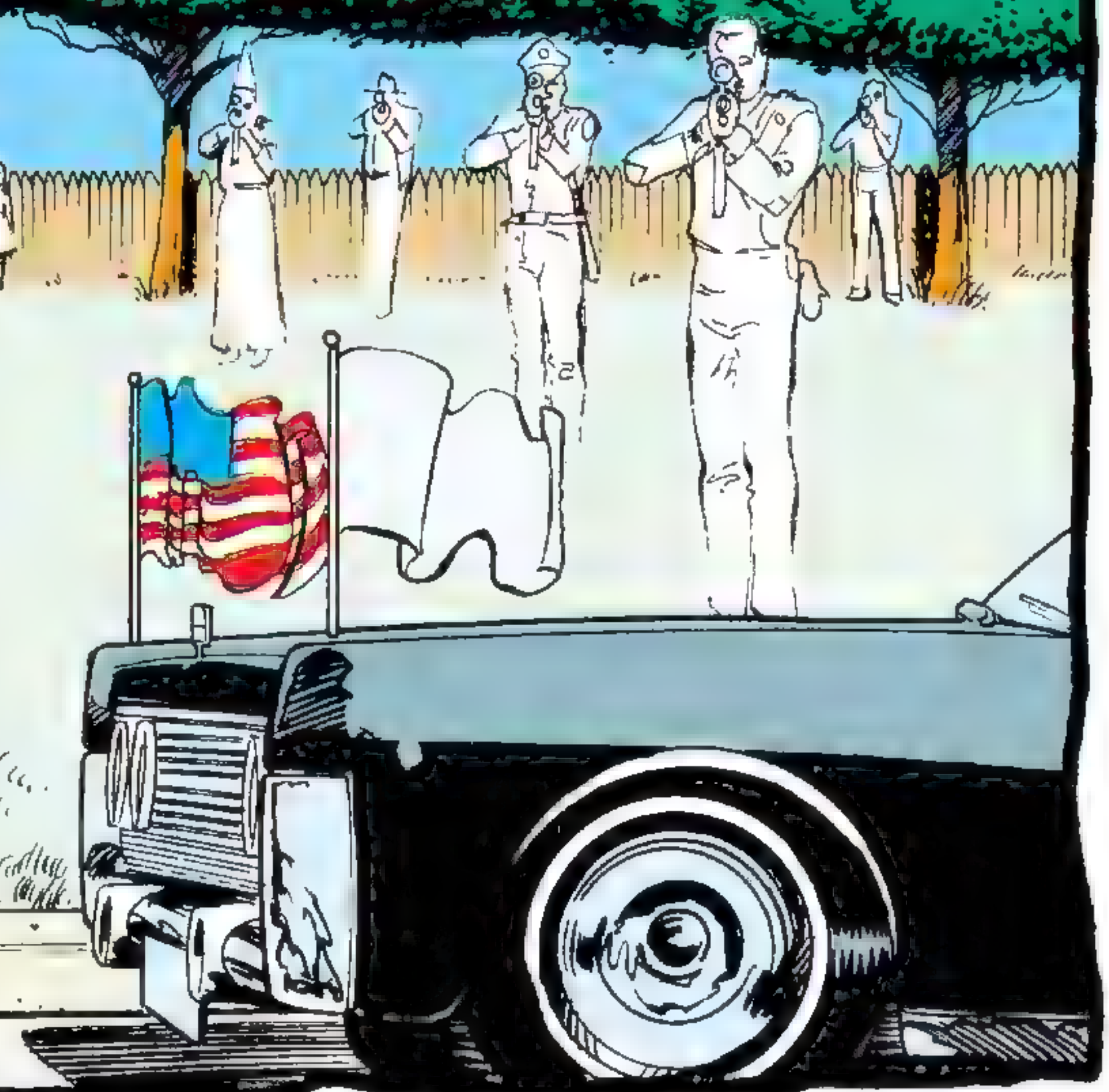




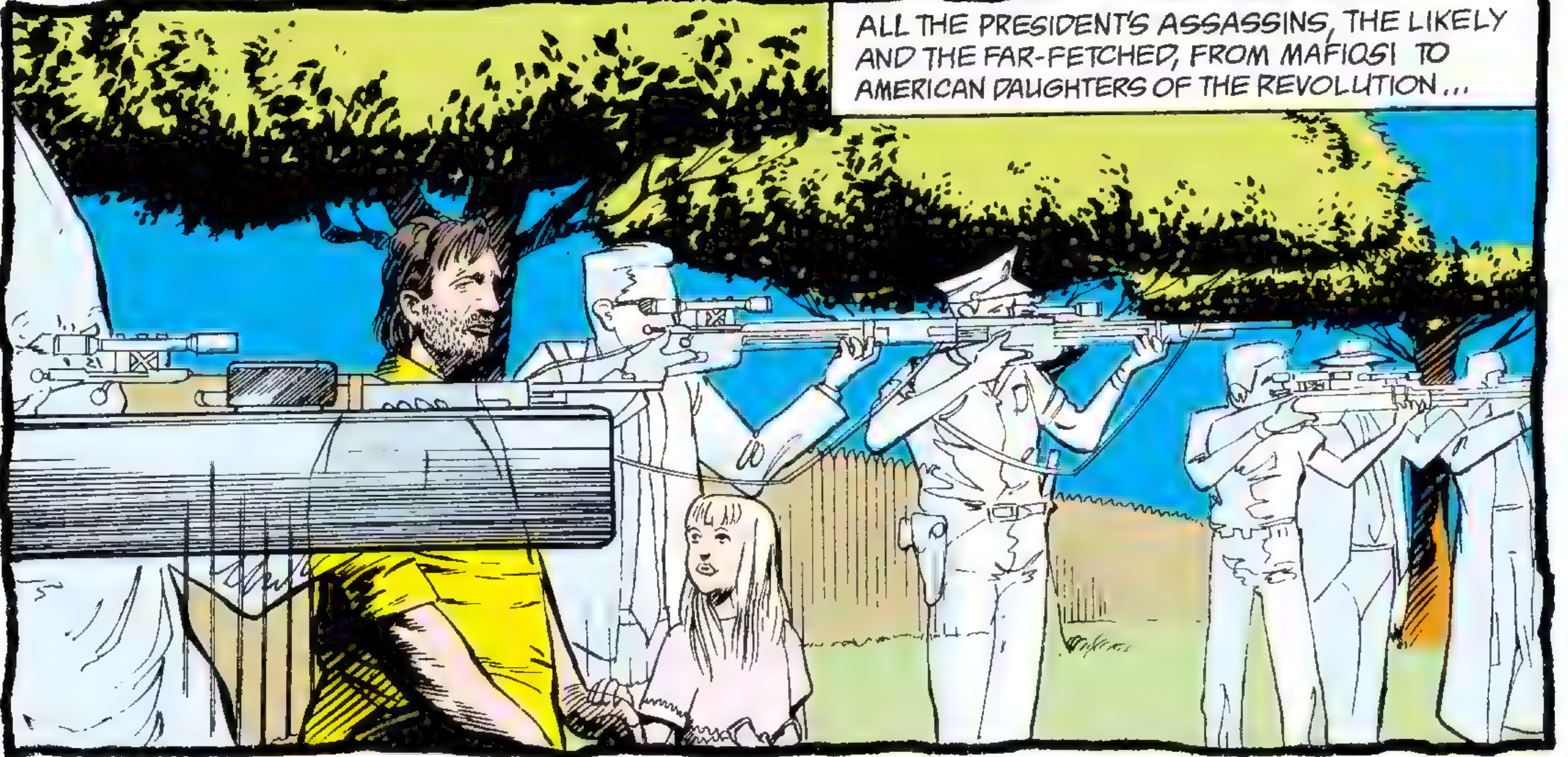
I CAN FEEL THIS STRANGE BODY,
THE LIGHT VOICE STARTLING ME,
HER SKINNY LEGS AND ARMS, HER
WELL-SCRUBBED LITTLE GIRL'S
SMELL...

I HAVE TO CONCENTRATE NOT TO
BECOME HER, TO FORGET WHO I AM.
AM I **ENJOYING** THIS? NO, LEAVE THAT,
LEAVE THAT THOUGHT FOR LATER...

TRILBY FOLLOWS ME, HIS DAUGHTER.
LETS ME LEAD HIM THROUGH HIS MADWORLD
AND SHOW HIM WHAT I MUST SHOW HIM...



ALL THE PRESIDENT'S ASSASSINS, THE LIKELY
AND THE FAR-FETCHED, FROM MAFIOSI TO
AMERICAN DAUGHTERS OF THE REVOLUTION...



JOHN BIRCH, TEAMSTERS UNION, K.G.B.,
KU KLUX KLAN, F.B.I., ANTI-CASTRO
UNITS, C.I.A. AND THE MOB...



SO OFTEN, BEHIND IT ALL,
THE **C.I.A.** AND THE **MOB**.

I SHOW HIM SOME OLD MOB CONTACTS OF **JOE**,
JFK'S PA, GIVING MONEY TO HELP BUY JFK INTO
THE WHITE HOUSE...



JFK AND BOBBY WERE HURTING **OLD**
FRIENDS WHEN THEY WENT AFTER
ORGANIZED CRIME. AND **JOE** WAS
PAST CONTROLLING HIS BOYS...

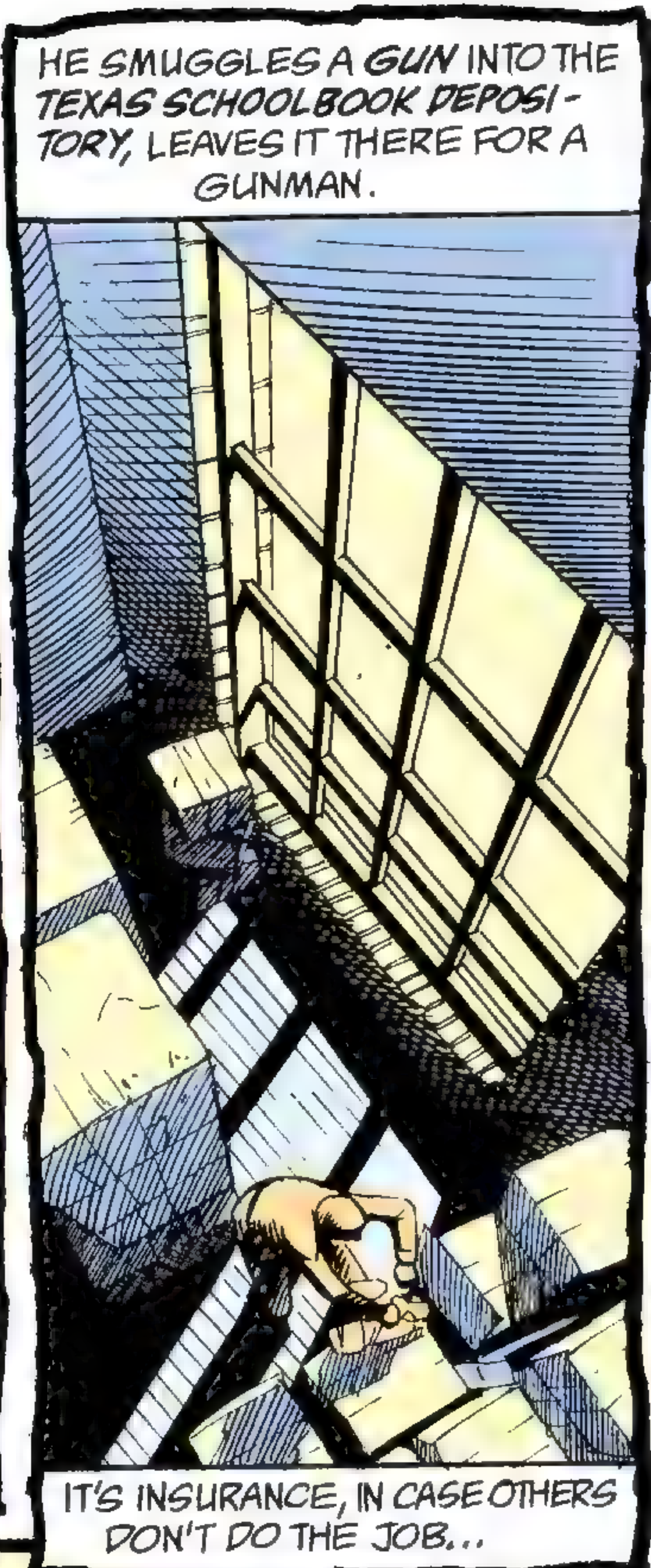


HOW ABOUT OSWALD? HE WAS JUST A PATSY, THEN?

WELCOME TO "BIG D" JACK & JACKIE

OSWALD HAD BEEN AN OPERATIVE FOR YEARS, SINCE HE WAS A MARINE.

PLAYED A COMPLEX GAME OF MULTIPLE BLUFF, WORKING FOR SO MANY GROUPS THAT AT TIMES EVEN THEY AND HE NO LONGER KNEW WHO, ULTIMATELY, WAS BEING SERVED...



HE SMUGGLES A GUN INTO THE TEXAS SCHOOLBOOK DEPOSITORY, LEAVES IT THERE FOR A GUNMAN.

IT'S INSURANCE, IN CASE OTHERS DON'T DO THE JOB...



BUT A FEW MINUTES AFTER THE HIT, HE KNOWS HE'S BEEN SET UP. HE GOES BACK TO HIS BOARDING HOUSE.

SOON A POLICE CAR PULLS UP OUTSIDE AND HONKS ITS HORN. THE SIGN THAT IT'S SAFE TO LEAVE. BUT BY NOW HE'S PANICKING...

HE WAS MEANT TO BE MET IN A CINEMA BY MEMBERS OF THE C.I.A. AND MOB-BACKED ANTI-CASTRO UNIT HE THOUGHT HE'D BEEN WORKING FOR...



THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO GET HIM OUT OF THE COUNTRY, GIVE HIM A NEW I.D. THOUGH SCARED, OSWALD HAS NOWHERE ELSE TO GO...

OF COURSE THIS IS WHERE THE COPS GET HIM. JACK RUBY'S ALREADY BEEN TOLD TO PUT OSWALD TO SLEEP, OR ELSE.

RUBY WILL GET ALL THE HELP HE'LL NEED FROM THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO GET OSWALD, THE LONE NUT ASSASSIN.



ARE YOU AN ANGEL? YOU BELIEVE IN HEAVEN, DON'T YOU?

I THINK I DO. I HOPE MY MOMMY AND DADDY ARE IN HEAVEN RIGHT NOW. BUT I'M NOT AN ANGEL, DARLING.

I THINK YOU ARE. I THINK I'VE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH THIS. I LOOKED DOWN AT MY MOMMY AND DADDY CRYING AND I WAS WONDERING WHAT FOR...

YOU CAN HAVE MY DOLL, IF YOU LIKE. MY DADDY GAVE IT TO ME THE DAY I FLOATED AND WENT TO HEAVEN.

MARY-ANN... THIS REALLY IS YOU, ISN'T IT? I MEAN, YOU'RE NOT JUST PART OF THE...

WE GO DEEPER INTO THE MADNESS, THE TRUTHS, THE KENNEDY SPHINX. I MUST SHOW HIM ALL, REPULSE HIM, MAKE HIM DISGORGE HIS MADNESS...

OVER THERE. DEAD MARILYN. DIED THE NIGHT BEFORE SHE SAID SHE WAS GOING TO BLOW THE WHISTLE ON JOHN AND BOBBY.

LOTS OF TRUTHS THERE. LOTS OF CORPSES, FLESH, BOOZE, SEX, SCANDAL. BUT IT GETS EVER SO MESSY. WANNA TAKE A PEEK?

NO... I DON'T WANT TO GO DOWN THERE...

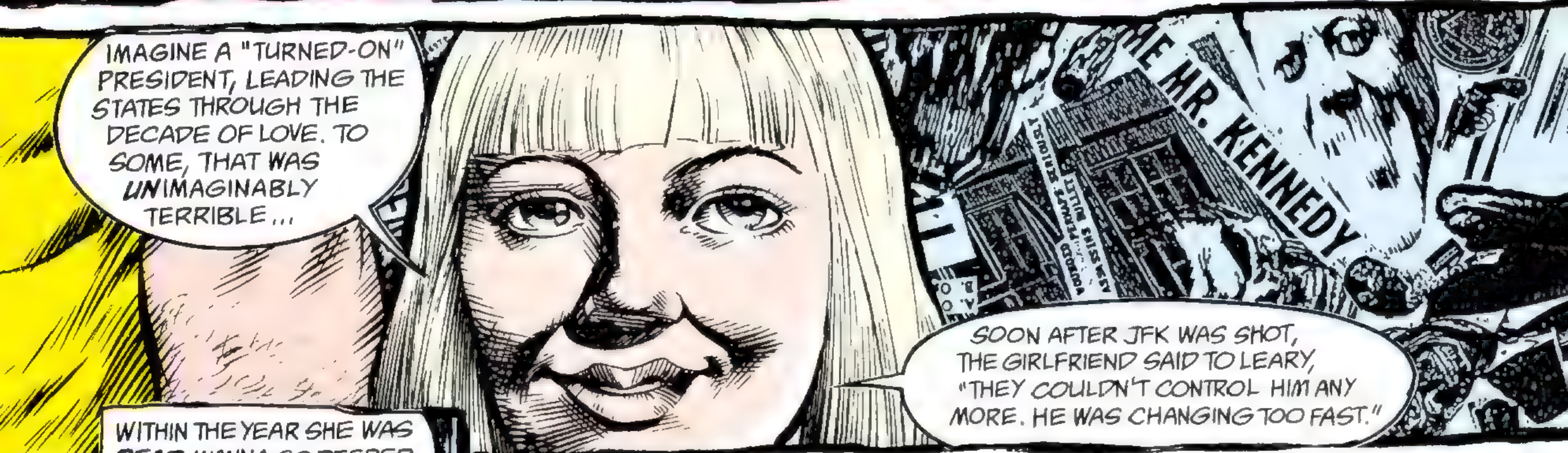
...MADNESS...



JESUS,
WHAT'S...

PSYCHEDELIC
KENNEDY IN THE WHITE
HOUSE. AN INTERESTING
AVENUE TO EXPLORE.

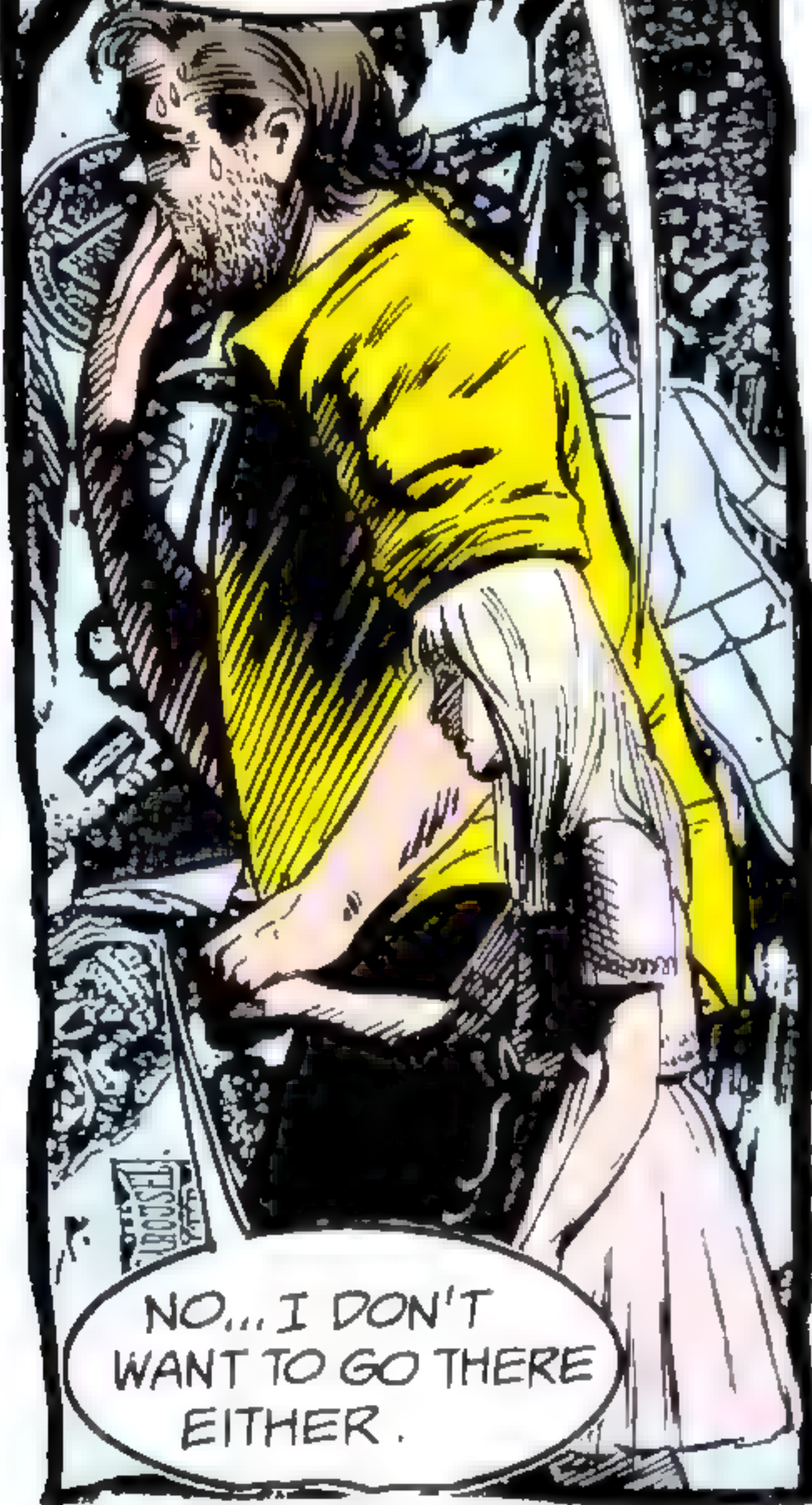
ON JFK'S BEHALF,
A GIRLFRIEND GOT ADVICE
FROM TIM LEARY ON CHEMICALLY-
INDUCED MIND EXPANSION...



IMAGINE A "TURNED-ON"
PRESIDENT, LEADING THE
STATES THROUGH THE
DECADE OF LOVE. TO
SOME, THAT WAS
UNIMAGINABLY
TERRIBLE...

SOON AFTER JFK WAS SHOT,
THE GIRLFRIEND SAID TO LEARY,
"THEY COULDN'T CONTROL HIM ANY
MORE. HE WAS CHANGING TOO FAST."

WITHIN THE YEAR SHE WAS
DEAD. WANNA GO DEEPER
INTO THAT? IT GETS
WEIRD...



NO... I DON'T
WANT TO GO THERE
EITHER.



SO I DRAG TRILBY SCREAMING
THROUGH ROWS OF GHOST
ASSASSINS AND GUTTERFULS
OF KENNEDYRHEA, UNTIL...

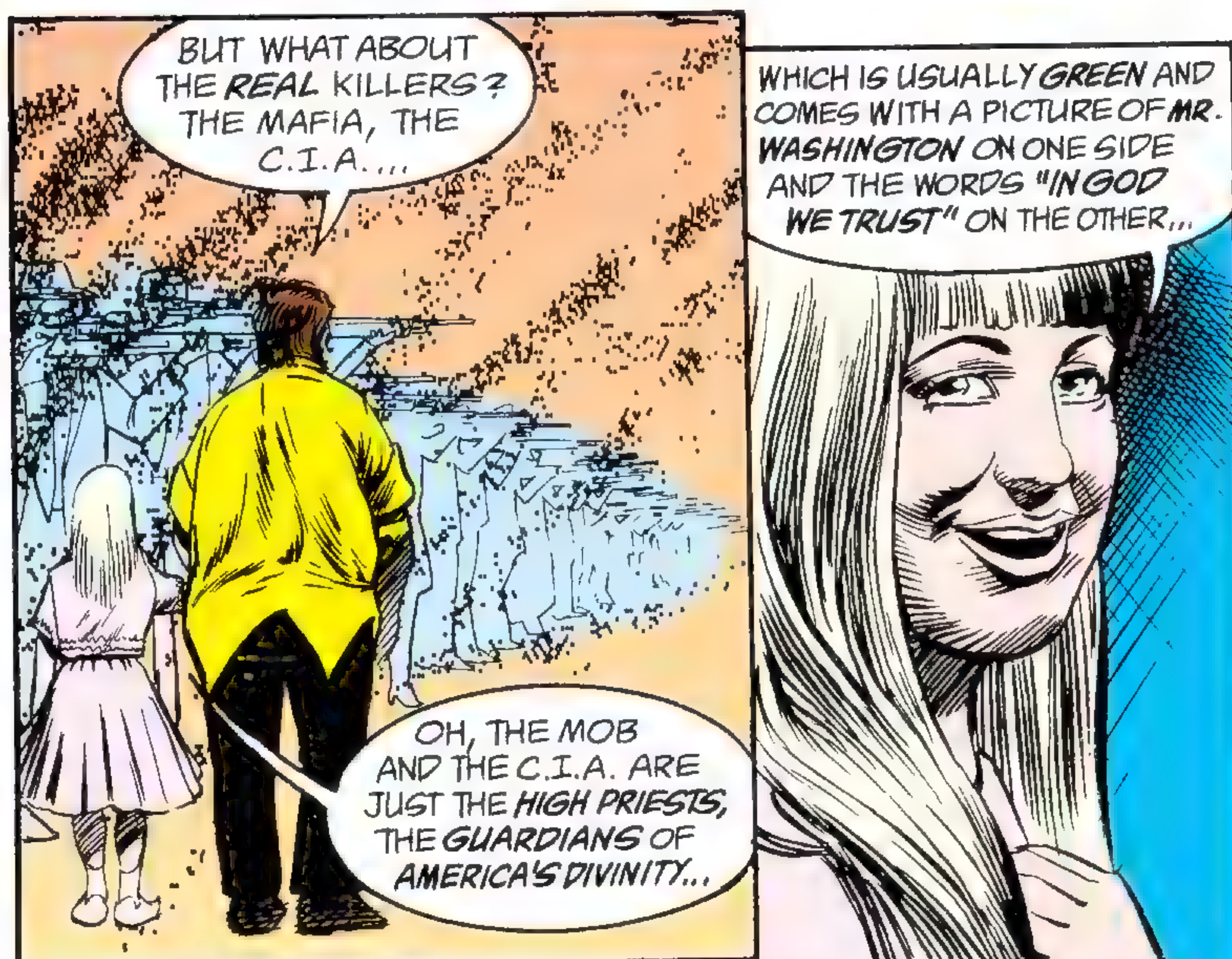
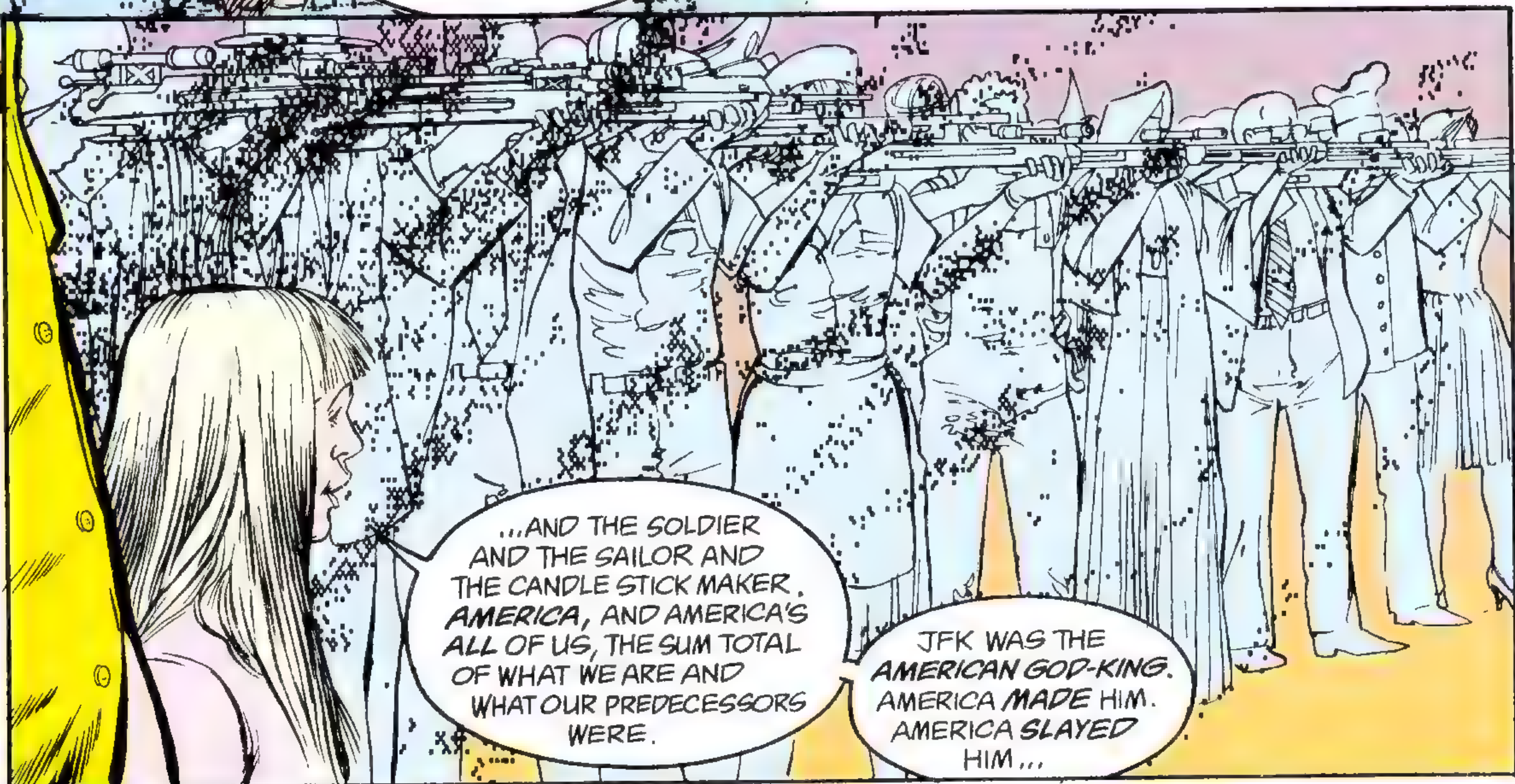
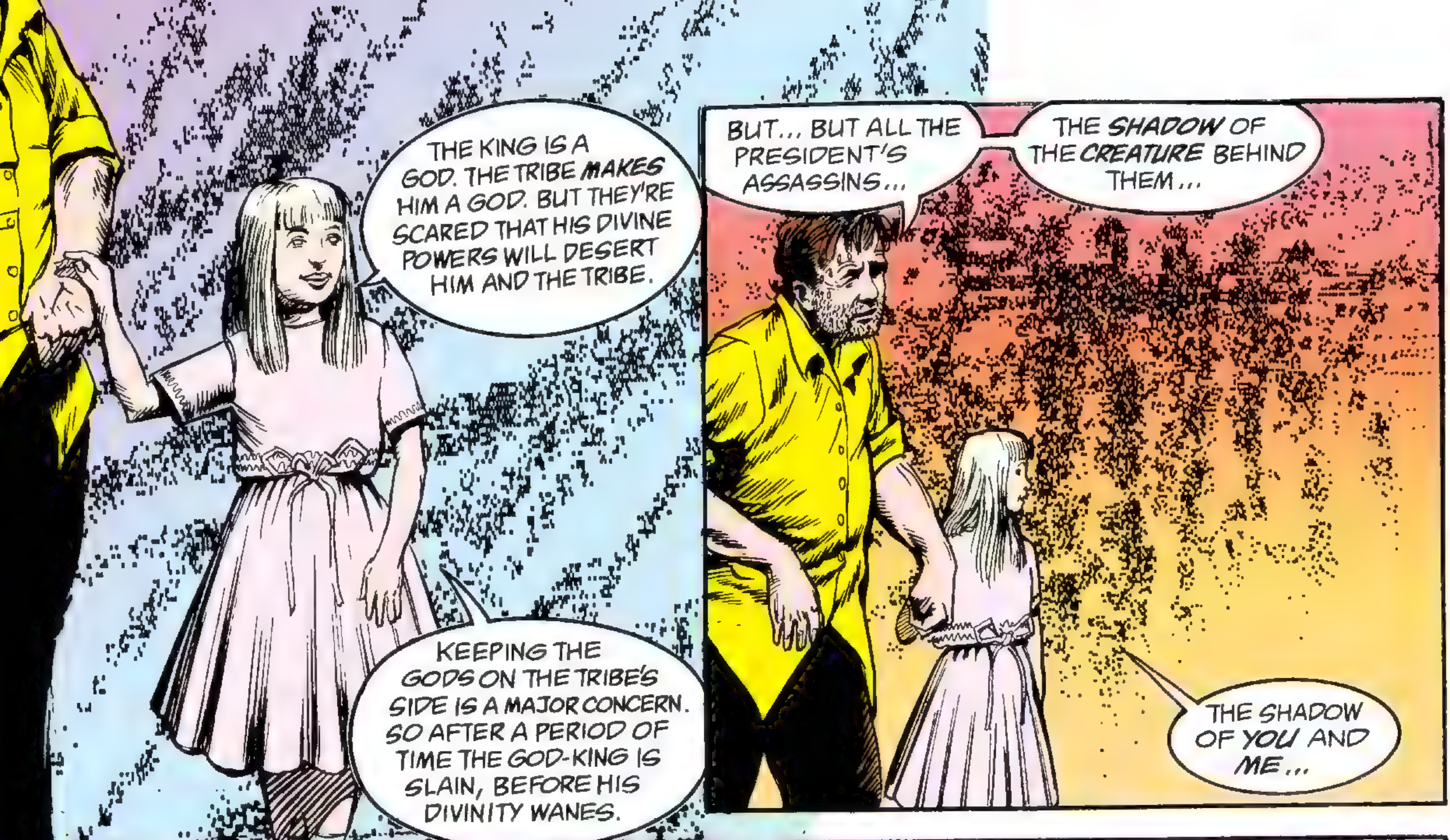
HOLD IT! STOP!
YOU SAID BEHIND
THEM ALL WAS THE
SAME HAND... THE
SHADOW OF THE SAME
CREATURE.

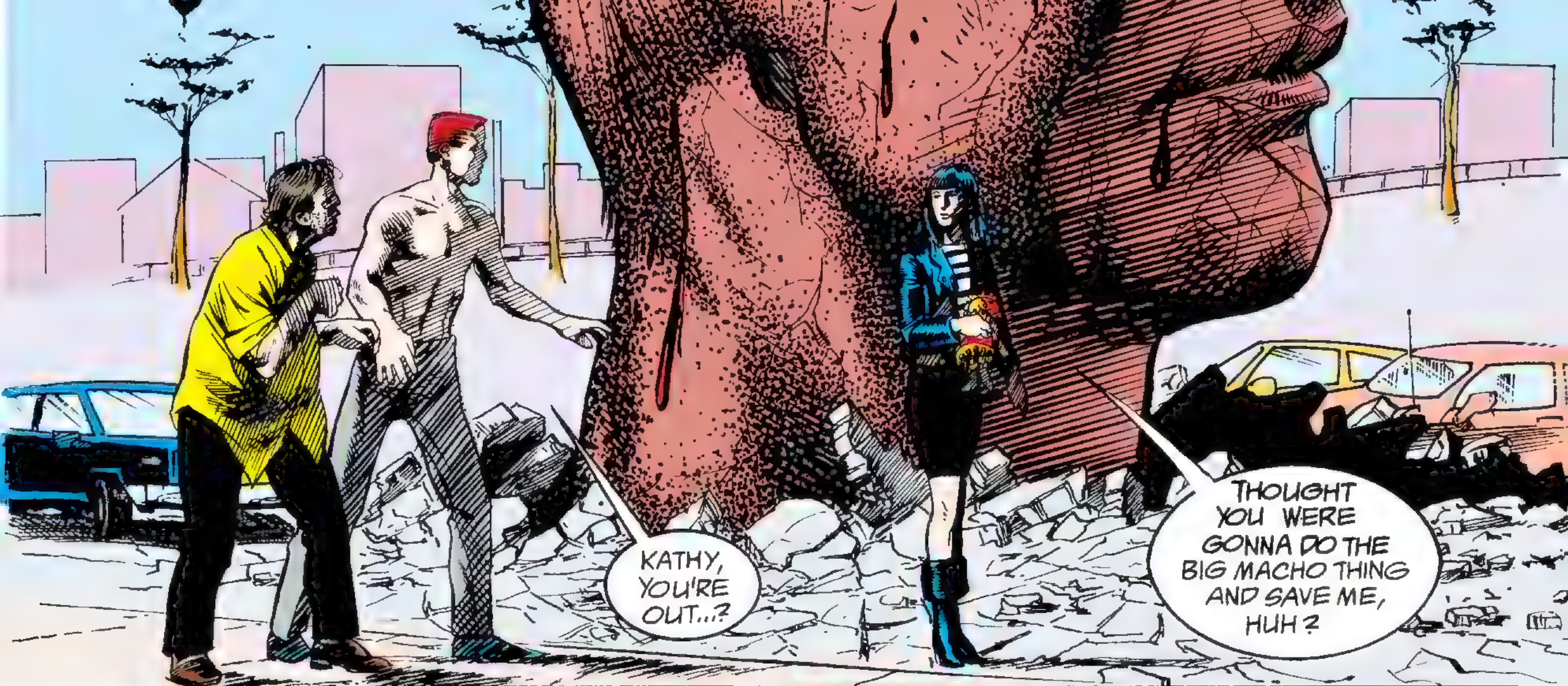
WHAT DID
YOU MEAN. WHO?

YOU SAW A
DOCUMENTARY ONCE.
ABOUT A PRACTICE
QUITE COMMON AMONGST
PRIMITIVE PEOPLES
ALL OVER...



IT'S CALLED "KILLING
THE GOD-KING"...





KATHY,
YOU'RE
OUT...?

THOUGHT
YOU WERE
GONNA DO THE
BIG MACHO THING
AND SAVE ME,
HUH?



WHAT'VE YOU
DONE WITH MY
MARY-ANN?

SHE WAS NEVER HERE,
DUANE. I'M SORRY. I JUST
CHANGED INTO HER. I TOOK HER
FROM YOUR OWN MIND. IT WAS THE
ONLY WAY I COULD GET TO YOU.



I WANT MARY-ANN BACK! I DON'T
KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING
ABOUT, JUST BRING HER
BACK!

YOU'VE HAD A
SPECIAL MADNESS,
IT TAKES HOLD OF ANY
LITTLE CRAZINESS YOU
HAVE AND SETS OFF
A KIND OF CHAIN
REACTION...

THE MADNESS
GROWS, OUT OF
CONTROL. IT BECOMES
REAL. NOT JUST FOR
YOU, BUT FOR
EVERYONE...



I'M A KIND OF DOCTOR. I'VE
ALMOST CURED YOU. AT LEAST,
I'VE HELPED YOU CURE YOUR-
SELF. I CAN TAKE THE MADNESS
OFF YOU.

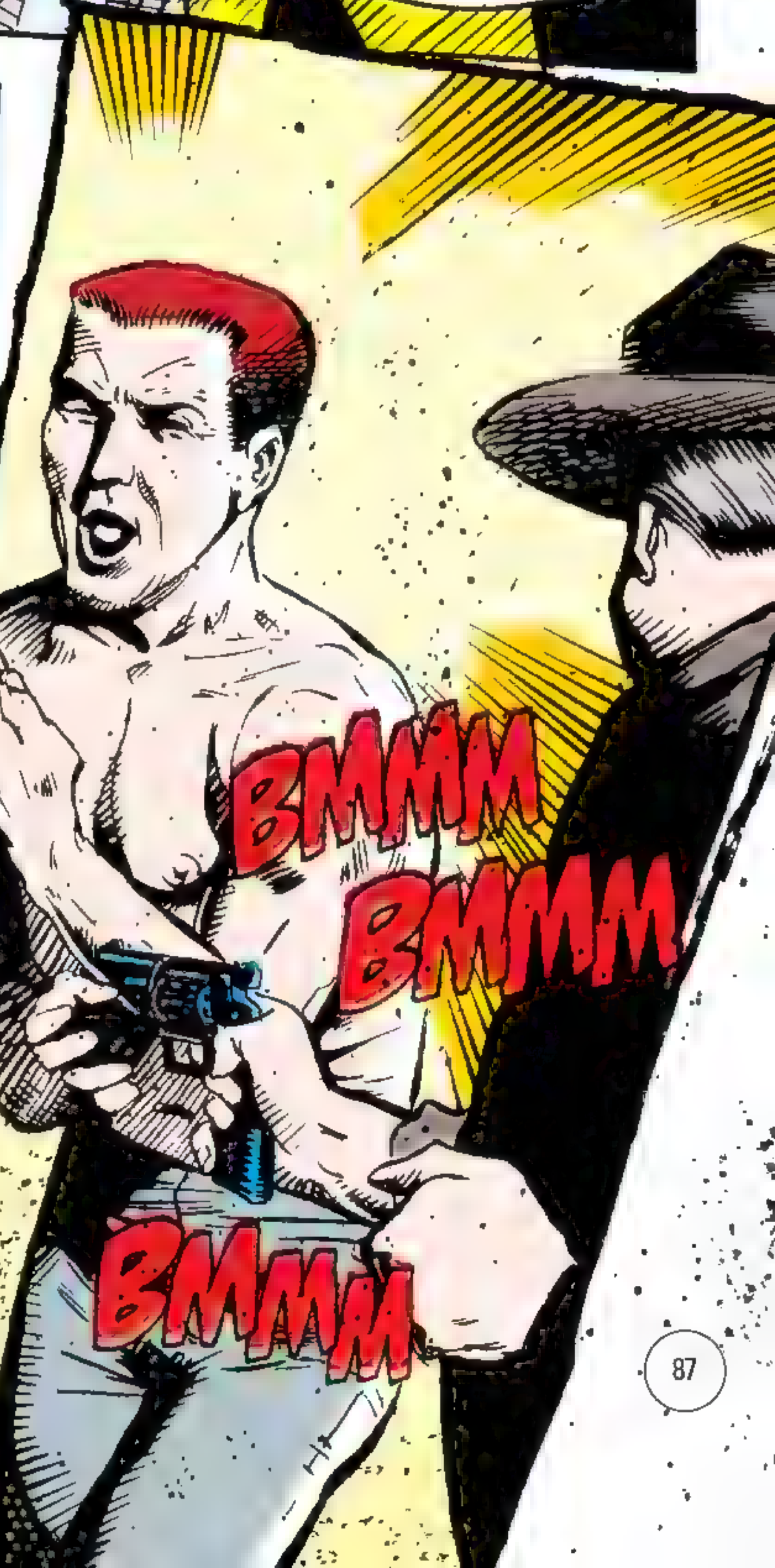
ANSWER THE
RIDDLE OF THE
SPHINX AND I
THINK YOU'LL BE
RID OF IT.

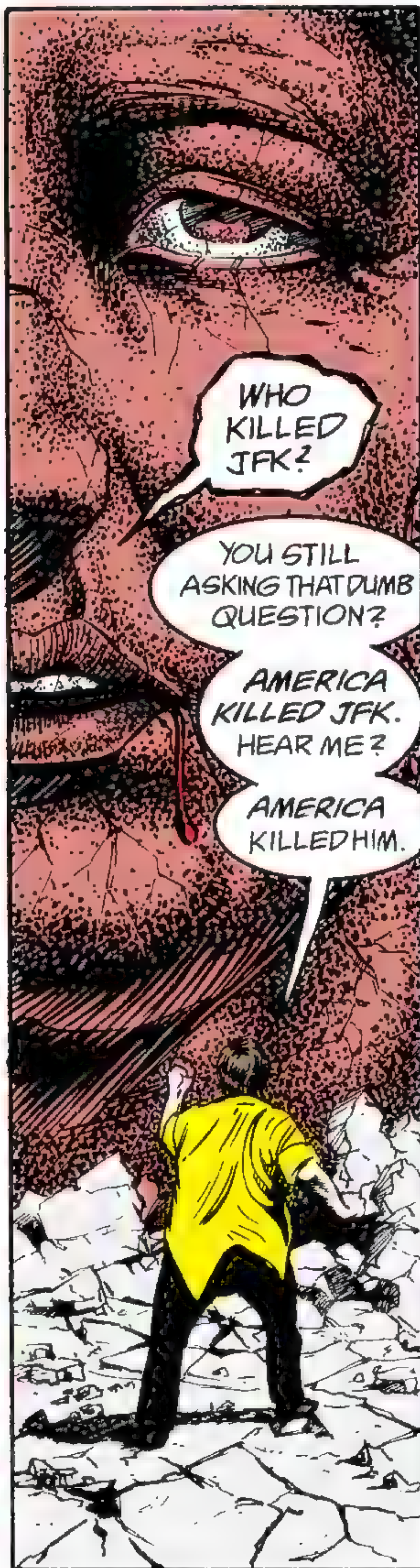
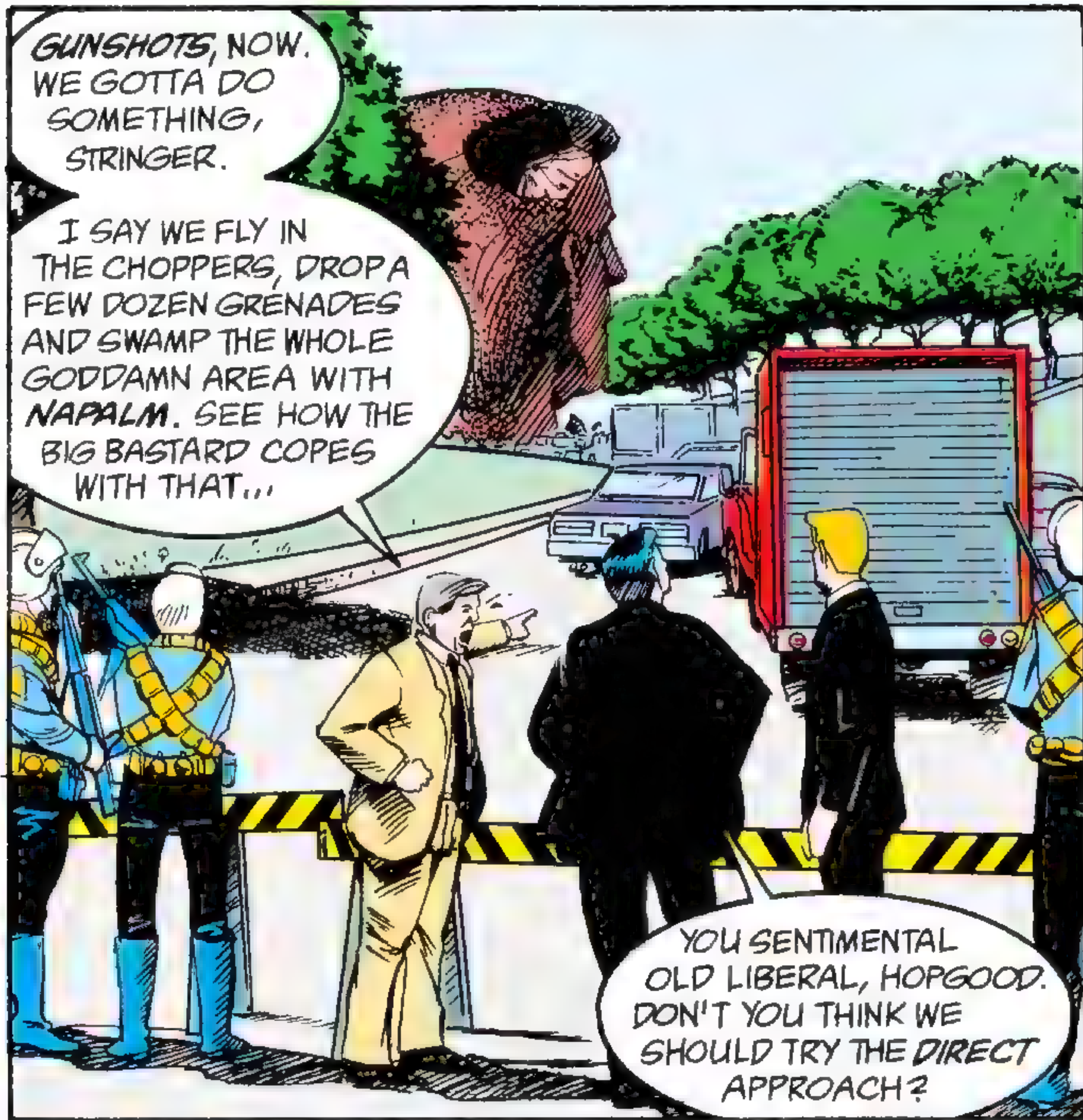
NO. I DON'T
CARE IF MARY-ANN'S
REAL OR NOT.
BRING HER
BACK.

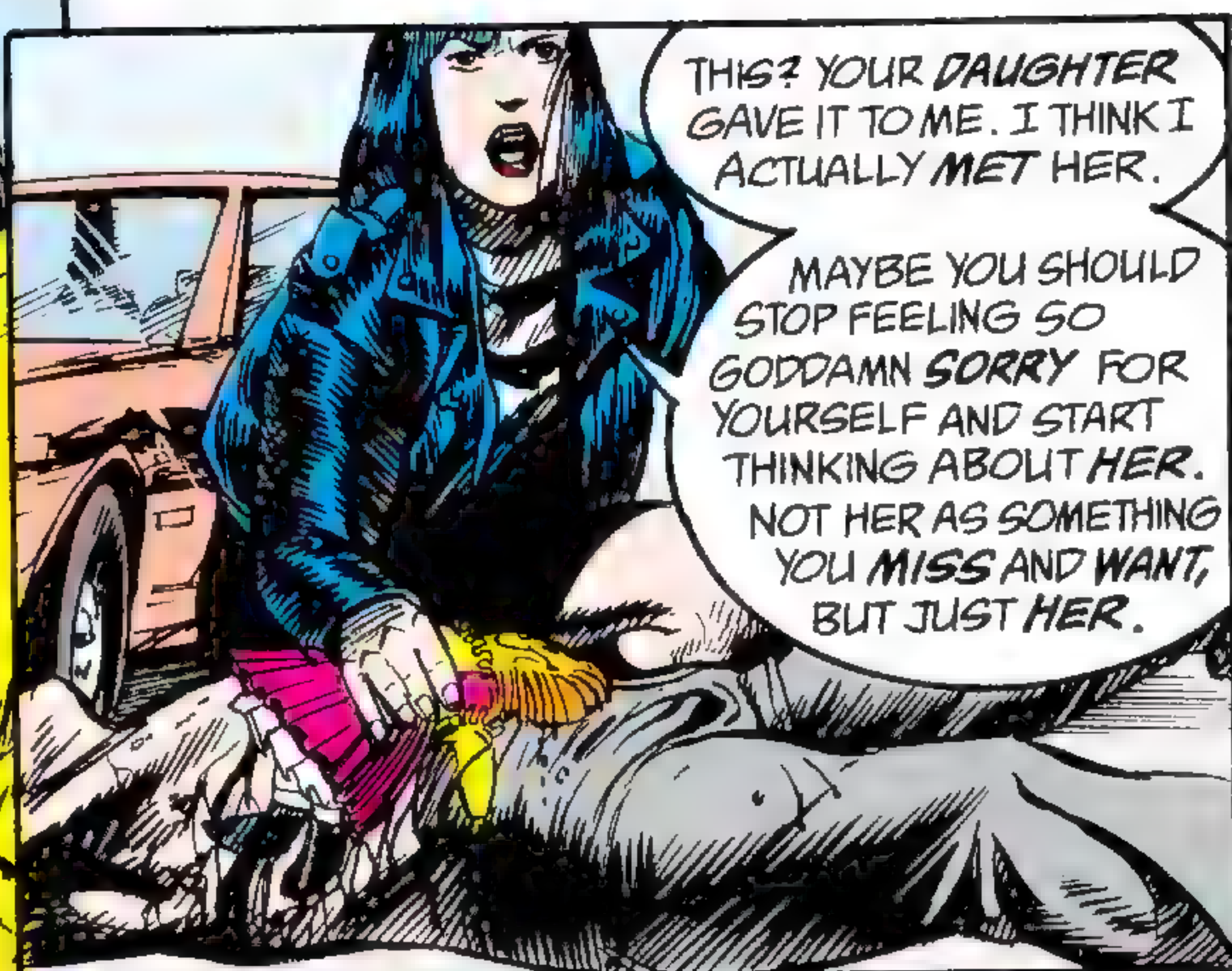


I'M SORRY. I
CAN'T DO THAT...

THEN YOU'VE
GOTTA BE PUT
TO SLEEP.

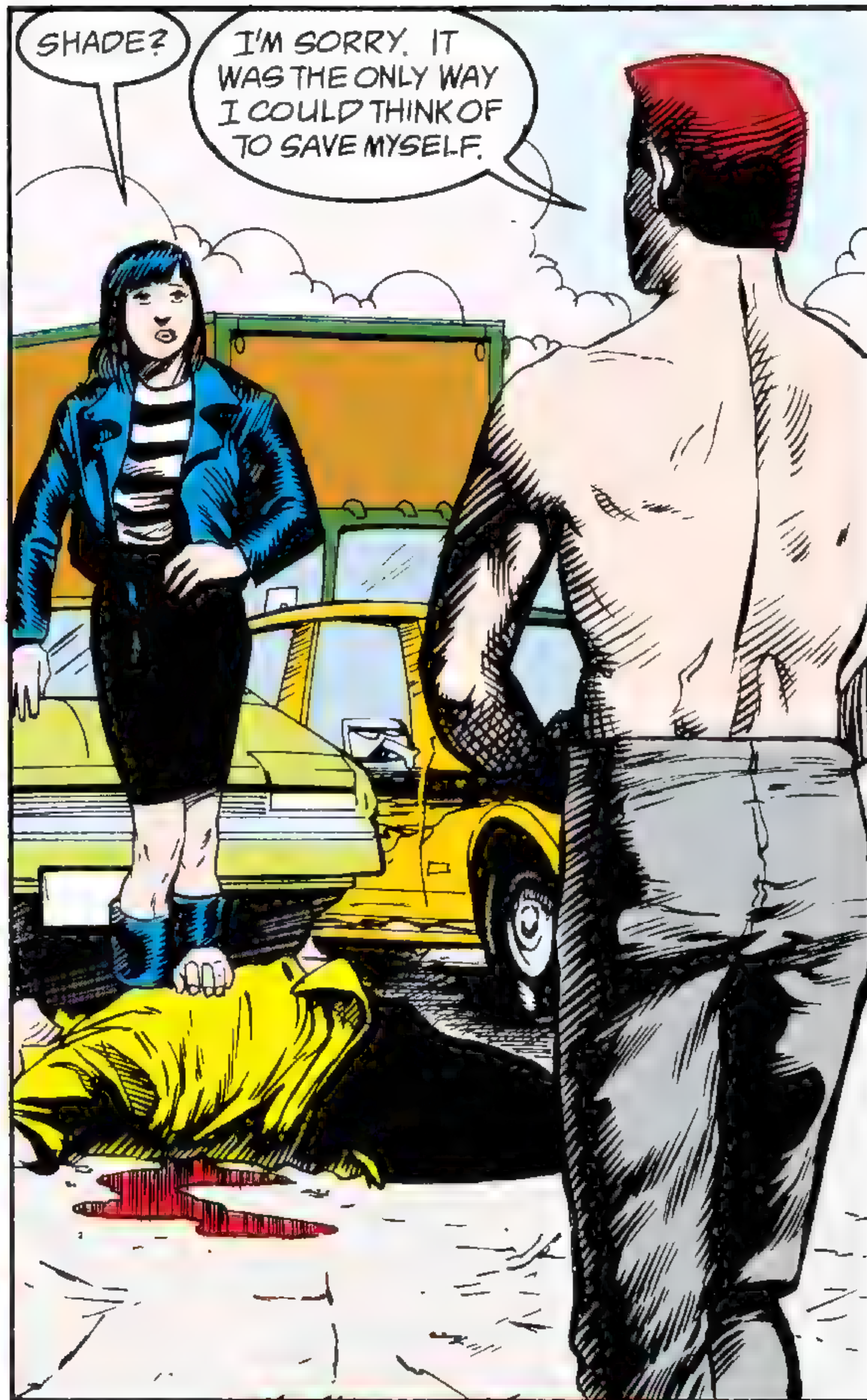






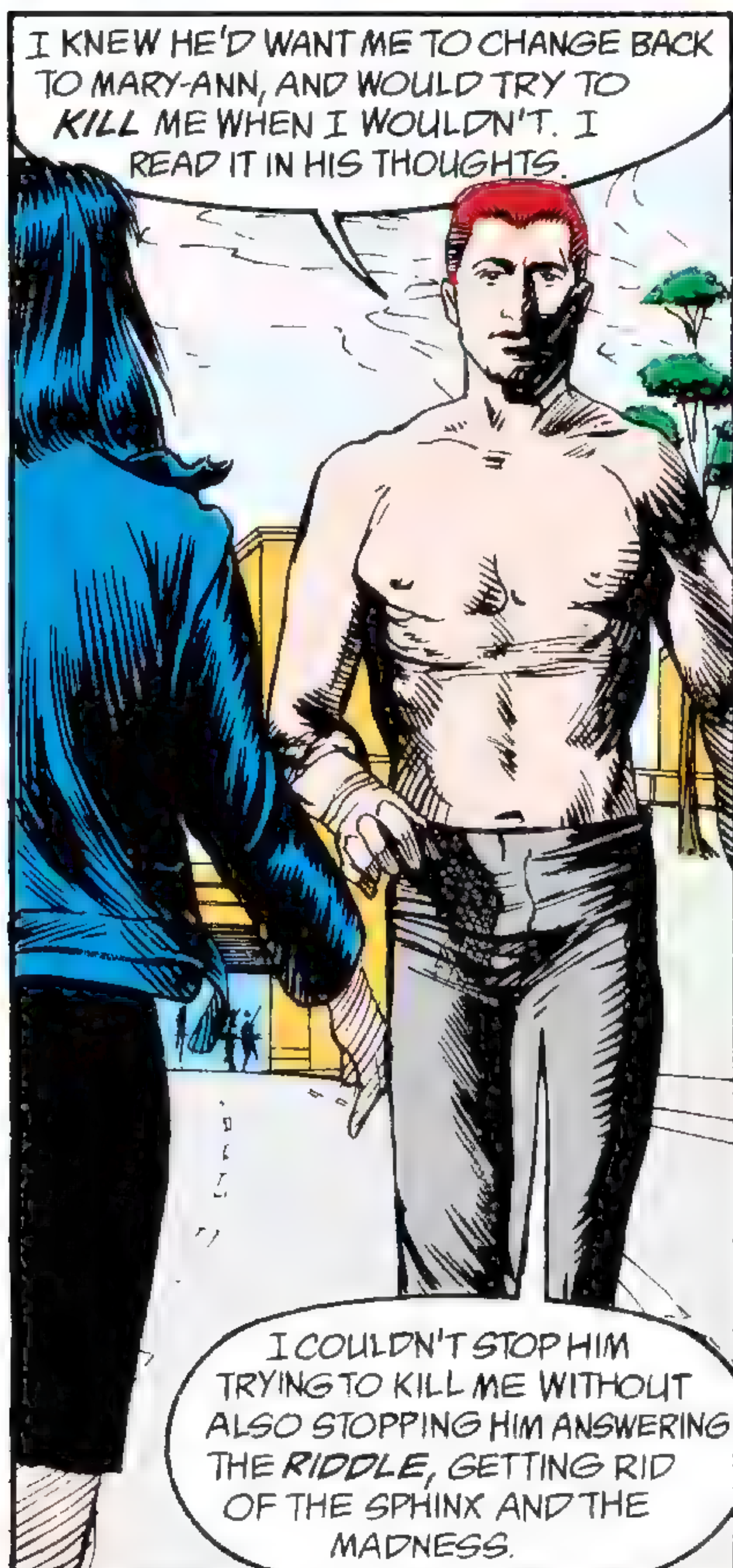


SHADE?



SHADE?

I'M SORRY. IT WAS THE ONLY WAY I COULD THINK OF TO SAVE MYSELF.

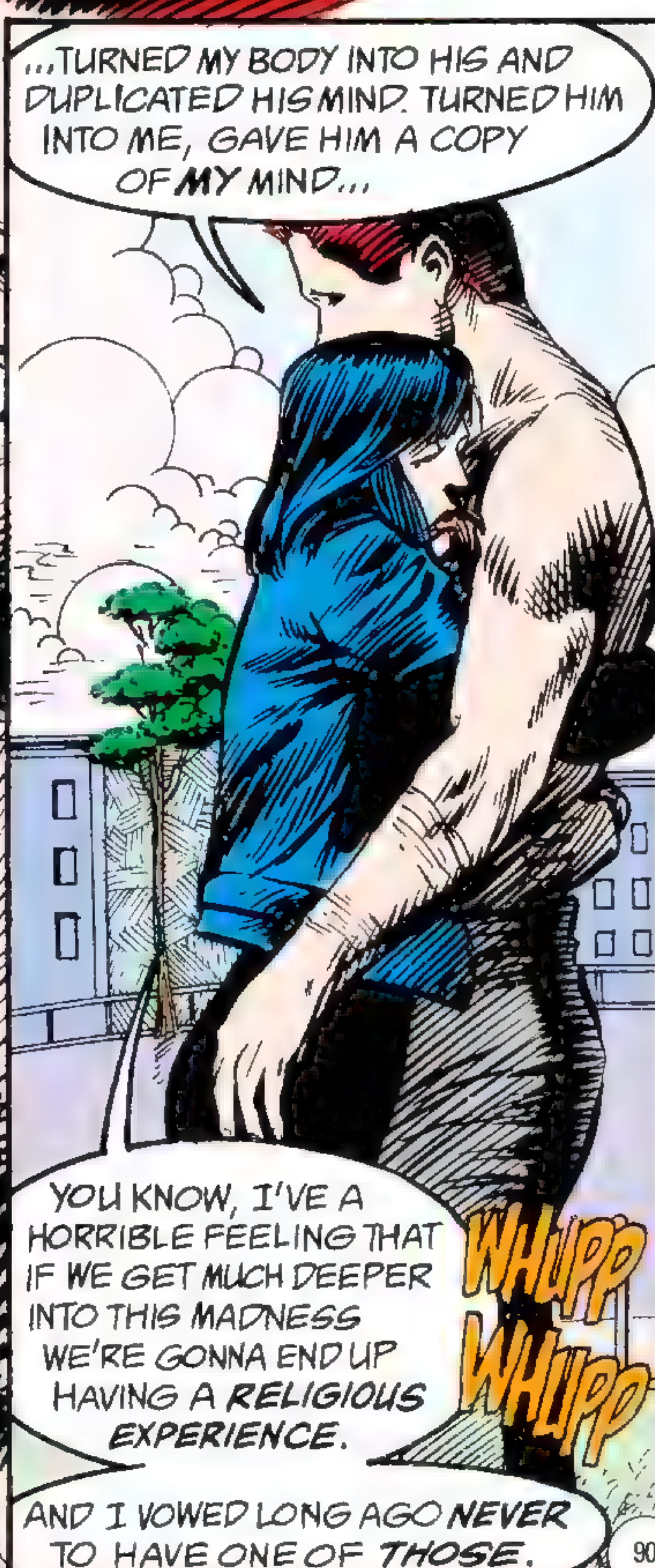


I KNEW HE'D WANT ME TO CHANGE BACK TO MARY-ANN, AND WOULD TRY TO KILL ME WHEN I WOULDN'T. I READ IT IN HIS THOUGHTS.

I COULDN'T STOP HIM TRYING TO KILL ME WITHOUT ALSO STOPPING HIM ANSWERING THE RIDDLE, GETTING RID OF THE SPHINX AND THE MADNESS.

SO I SWAPPED. BUT WHILE I WAS HIM I DIDN'T REALIZE I WAS REALLY *ME*, IF YOU GET MY MEANING. THE SAME AS WHEN WE REALLY THOUGHT WE WERE JFK AND THE FIRST LADY.

I SWAPPED AS WE LEFT THE SPHINX...

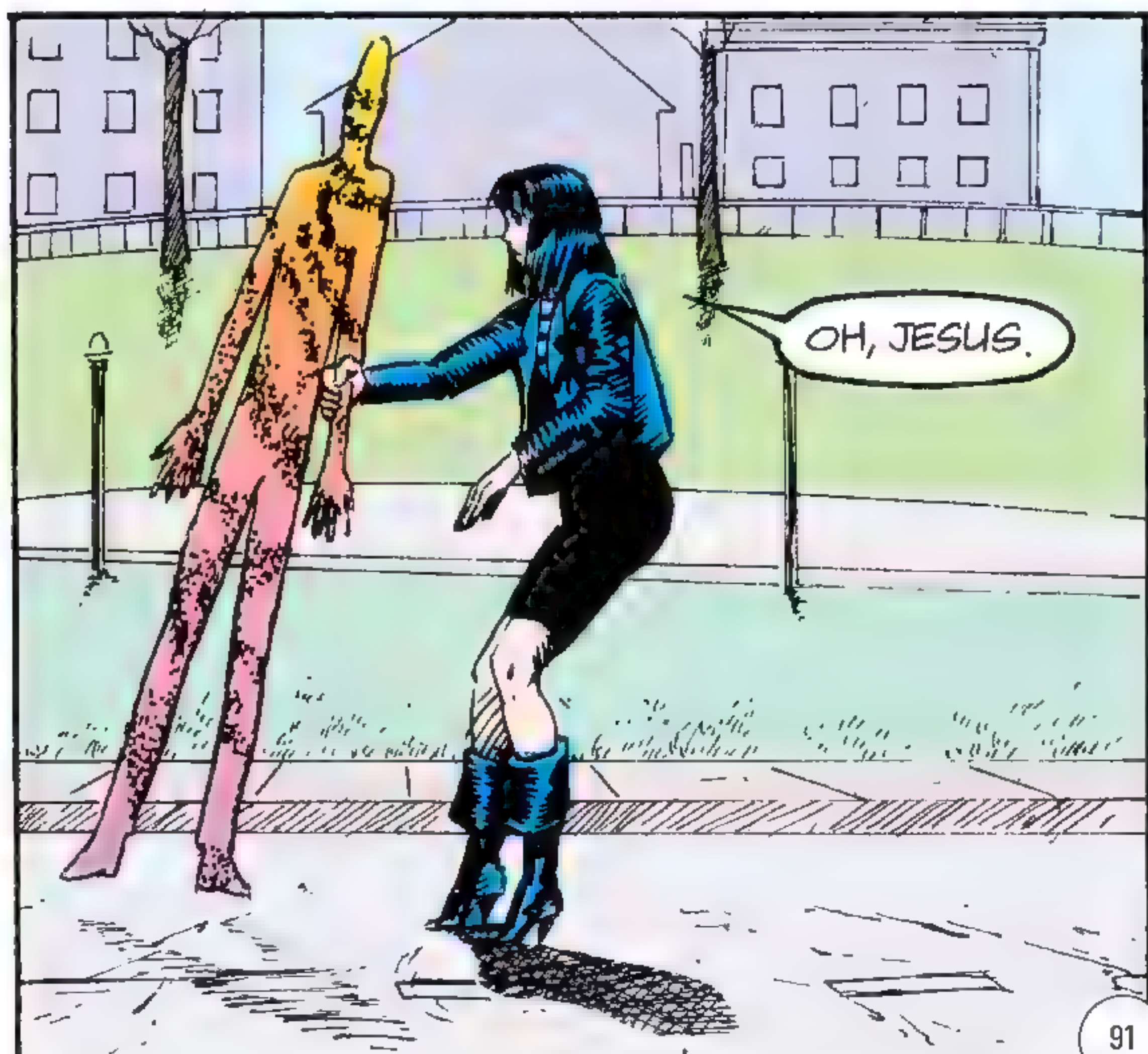
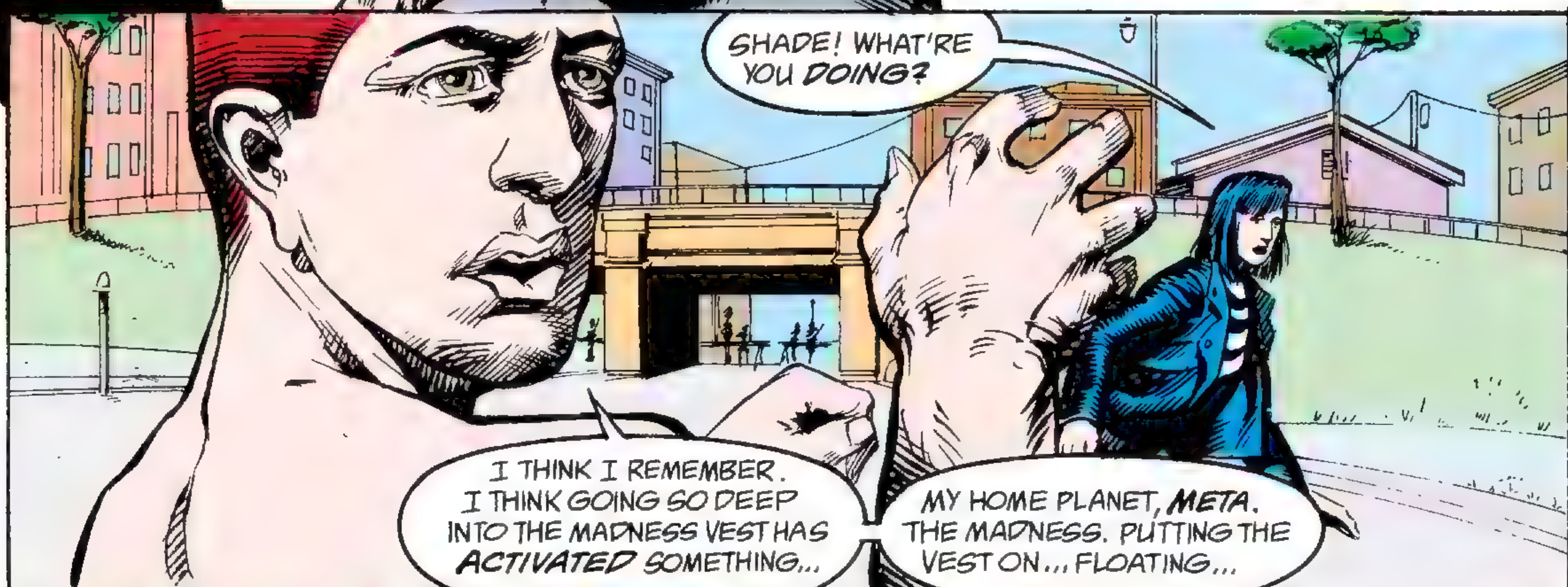
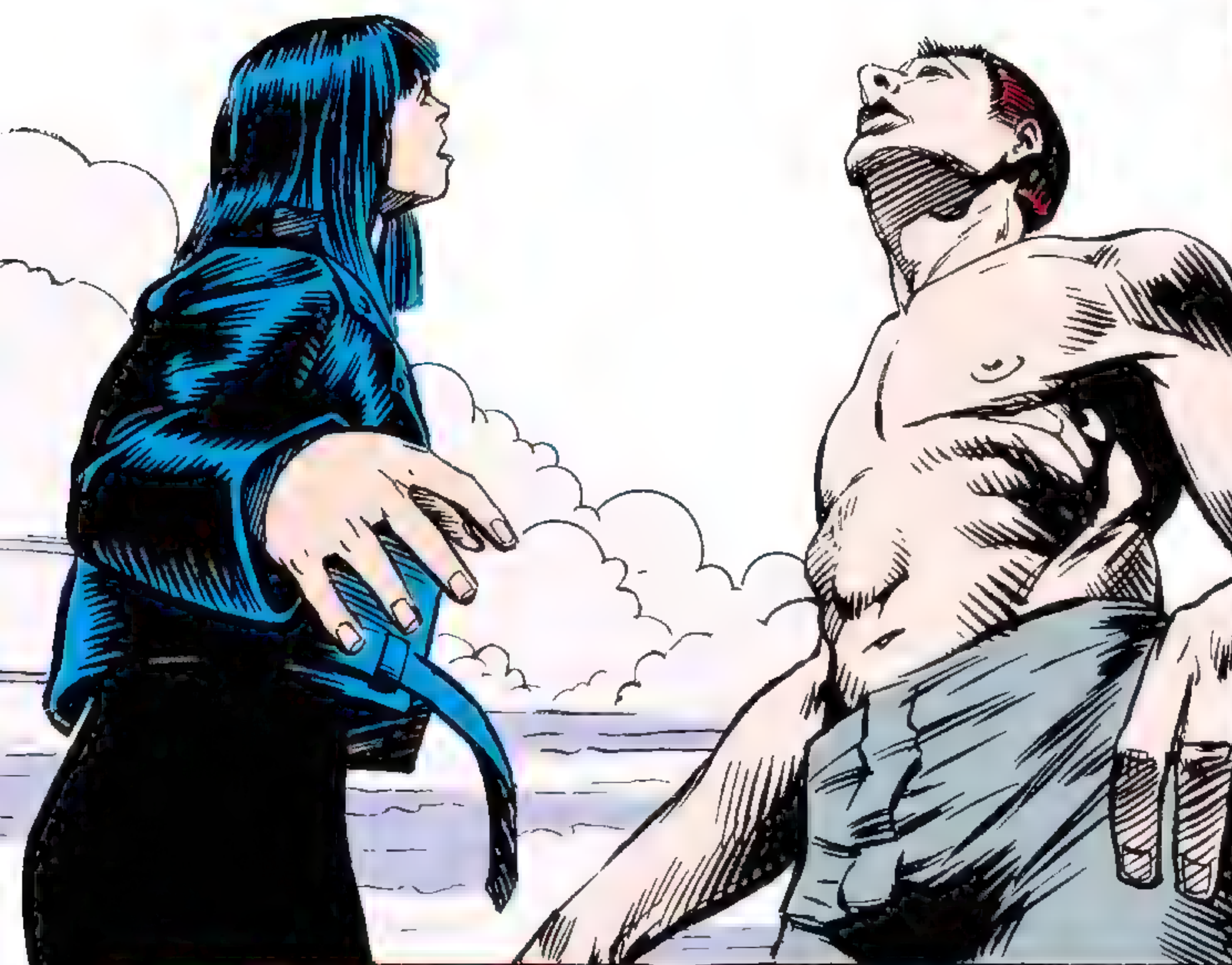


...TURNED MY BODY INTO HIS AND DUPLICATED HIS MIND. TURNED HIM INTO ME, GAVE HIM A COPY OF *MY* MIND...

YOU KNOW, I'VE A HORRIBLE FEELING THAT IF WE GET MUCH DEEPER INTO THIS MADNESS WE'RE GONNA END UP HAVING A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

AND I VOWED LONG AGO NEVER TO HAVE ONE OF *THOSE*.

WHUPP WHUPP







McCarthyism 1990

MY MIND SPINS LIKE A SEVERED MOON,
I'M FLOATING OUT OF ORBIT, OSCILLATING
WILDLY THROUGH SPACE. ONE MINUTE
I WAS IN DALLAS, NOW...

ALL SENSE GONE. I REACH OUT
FOR SOMETHING SOLID AROUND
WHICH I CAN GRAVITATE, ANYTHING,
MY BEGINNING, YES, REMEMBER...

I REMEMBER LOOKING UP AT
MAMA'S FACE AS SHE SANG ME
A SONG TO SEND ME ASLEEP...

THINK, REMEMBER.
I WAS A CHILD ONCE...

A STRANGE CHILD. AS YOUNG AS
SEVEN I'D STARE AT SUNSETS
AND SHED A FEW TEARS, THOUGH
I COULDN'T SAY WHY...

TOO SENSITIVE, THEY SAID. I
WORE A LOUD CRAVAT AND READ
POETRY, NOT THE MODERN
REGIMENTAL CHORIAMBIC QUATRAINS,
BUT THE OLD...

AT THIRTEEN I FELL IN LOVE WITH
RADHU, A GIRL WITH FLAXEN HAIR.

...PRE-SACRED LASER.
LOOSER, MORE PASSIONATE,
MORE FLAWED...

I'D WAIT ALL DAY BY HER
WINDOW FOR A GLIMPSE,
HOLDING MY BREATH UNTIL
I ALMOST FAINTED.

ONE NIGHT I STOLE INTO HER BEDROOM, SPELLBOUND AS THE DAWN SLOWLY PAINTED HER FACE, BUT MY RACING HEART MUST HAVE WOKEN HER...

AHHIEE! FATHER! FATHER! I'M BEING ATTACKED!

RADHU, BE QUIET, I'M ONLY LOOKING AT YOU. I LOVE YOU. I...

UHHFF

DOCTORS AND PRIESTS CONFERRED ON MY WORRISOME CASE. TOO DREAMY. TOO IMPULSIVE. TOO BAD.

IT WAS DECIDED THAT MY CONFIRMATION SHOULD BE BROUGHT FORWARD...

AH, MY CONFIRMATION! MOM SMILING AS THE HOLY SURGEON DIRECTS THE SACRED LASER INTO MY HEAD. CHASING OUT DEMONS AND YOUTHFUL MADNESS...

AN ADULT, HEAD SPINNING ONCE MORE, A CRYING SUNSET...

MAKING ME FIT TO BE AN ADULT...

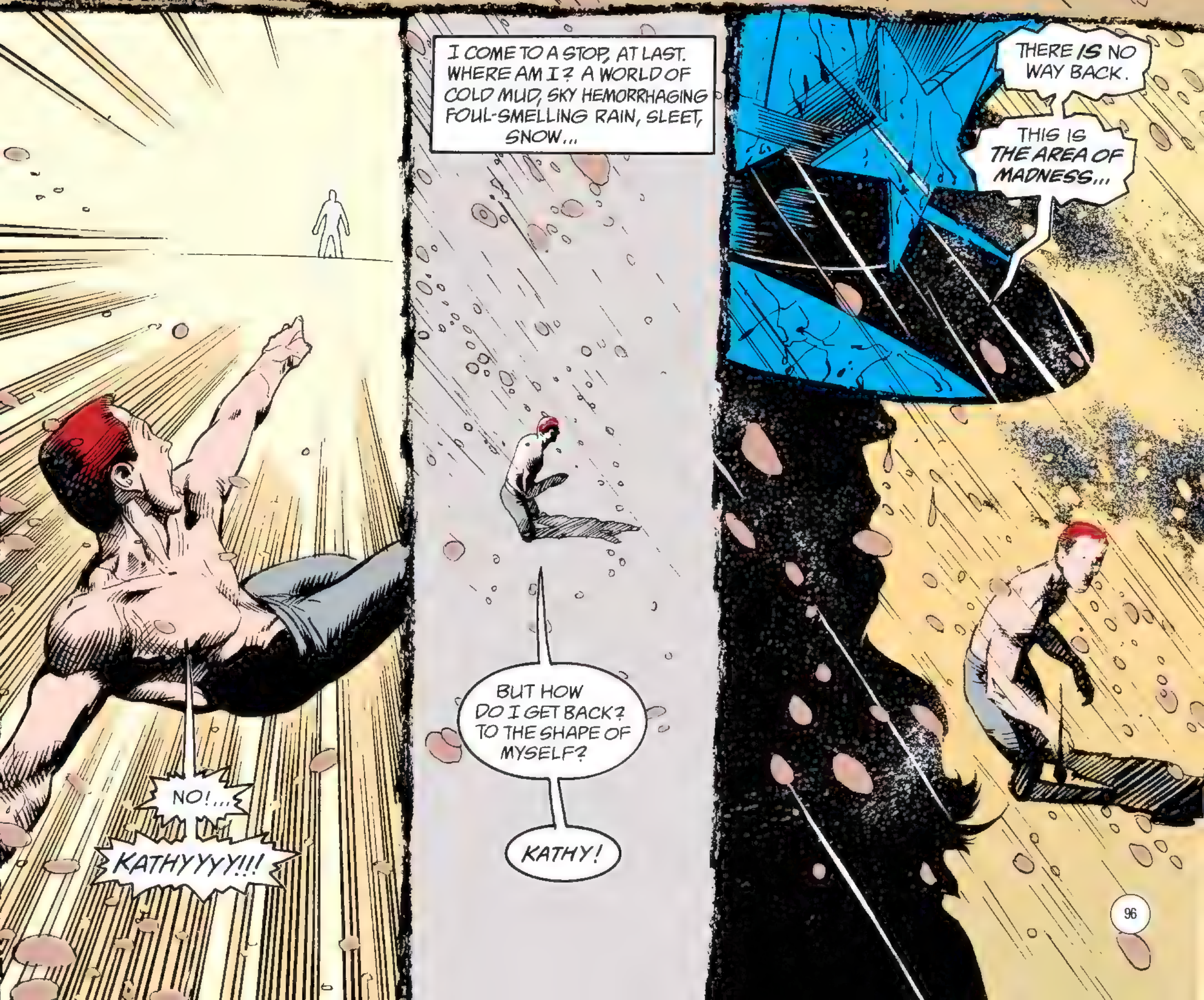
A HELICOPTER'S BLADES AND A GIRL'S VOICE SHOUTING AND THE SMELL OF HOT TARMAC AS CONSCIOUSNESS RETURNS LIKE A DIZZY STORM...



AND...

MY GOD...

KATHY,
WHAT'S...



I COME TO A STOP, AT LAST.
WHERE AM I? A WORLD OF
COLD MUD, SKY HEMORRHAGING
FOUL-SMELLING RAIN, SLEET,
SNOW...

THERE IS NO
WAY BACK.

THIS IS
THE AREA OF
MADNESS...

NO!...

KATHYYYYY!!!

BUT HOW
DO I GET BACK?
TO THE SHAPE OF
MYSELF?

KATHY!



AND I AM THE
AMERICAN SCREAM.
E PLURIBUS UNUM,
OUT OF MANY,
ONE...

GIVER OF VOICE
AND FLESH TO THE
QUIET SCREAMS OF
UNQUIET MINDS...

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SHADE created by STEVE DITKO



AND WHAT QUIET
SCREAMS, WHAT SLY
BLISTERS OF MADNESS
ARE LURKING WITHIN
YOU, SHADE?

BEFORE I'M FINISHED, YOU
WILL BE REDUCED TO NOTHING
BUT A MOUTH, NO MEMORY, NO
SOUL...



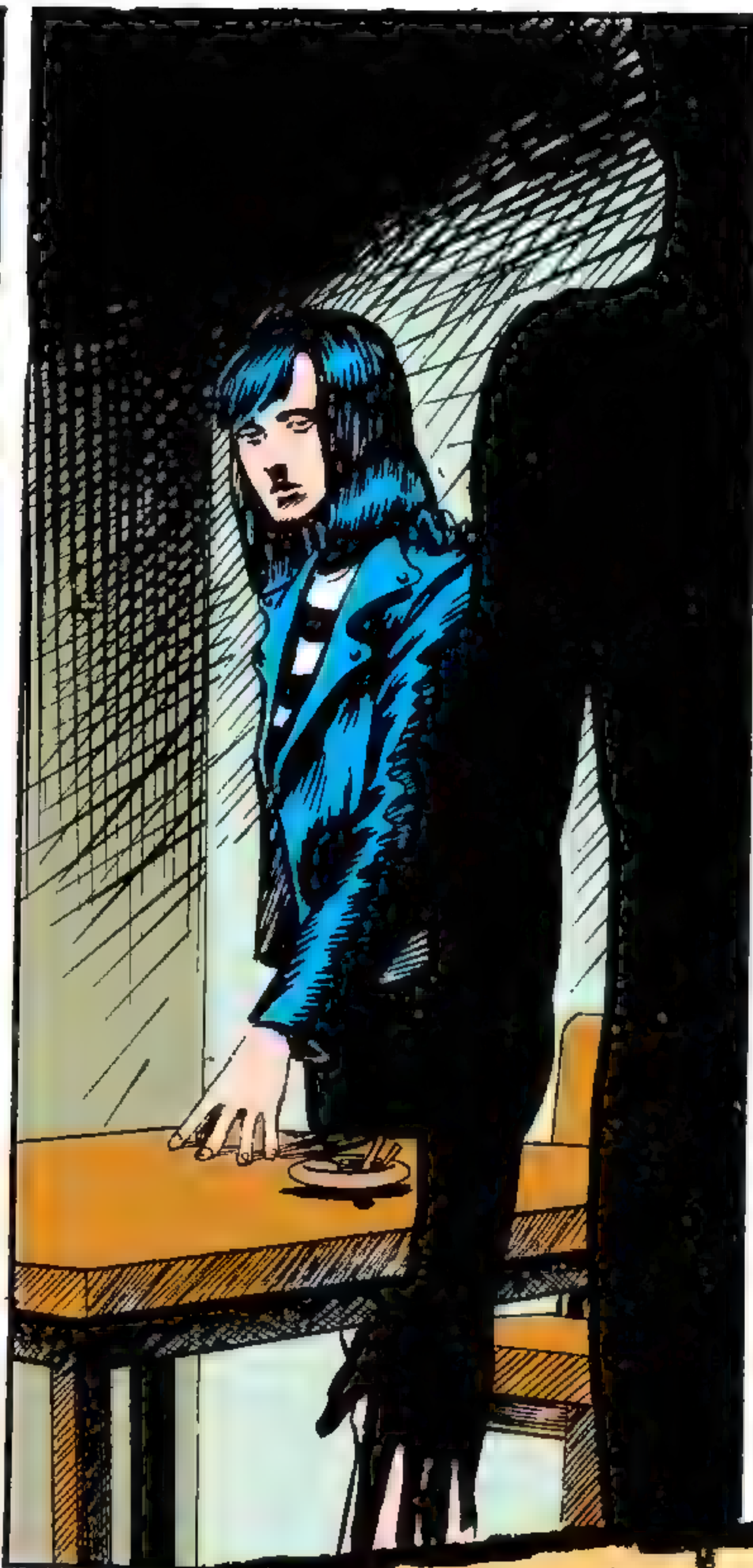
I DON'T BELIEVE
YOU. THERE IS A
WAY BACK...

...A FACELESS,
MINDLESS MOUTH...

SCREAMING
ALONE IN THE DARK
AFTER TWILIGHT'S
LAST GLEAMING FOR
ALL TIME...



SHALL WE
BEGIN?



HEY. HEY,
SHADE...

ARE
YOU IN
THERE?...

SHADE?

HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN
IN THE AREA OF MADNESS?

HE EXPLAINED THAT TIME
IS **ABSOLUTE** HERE, AN
ETERNAL **NOW** EMBRACING
PAST AND **PRESENT**...


BUT I STILL FEEL THE **WEIGHT**
OF TIME AS I CRAWL, SEARCHING
FOR THE DOOR OUT OF **THE AREA**.

IT FEELS LIKE A **THOUSAND**
YEARS, GIVE OR TAKE A
DECADE...


TEN CENTURIES PUMMELLED
INCESSANTLY AND UNCHANGINGLY,
BLIND NOW, MUD-CAKED EYES...

HE'S TRYING TO DRIVE
ME MAD. HE'S SUCCEEDING.



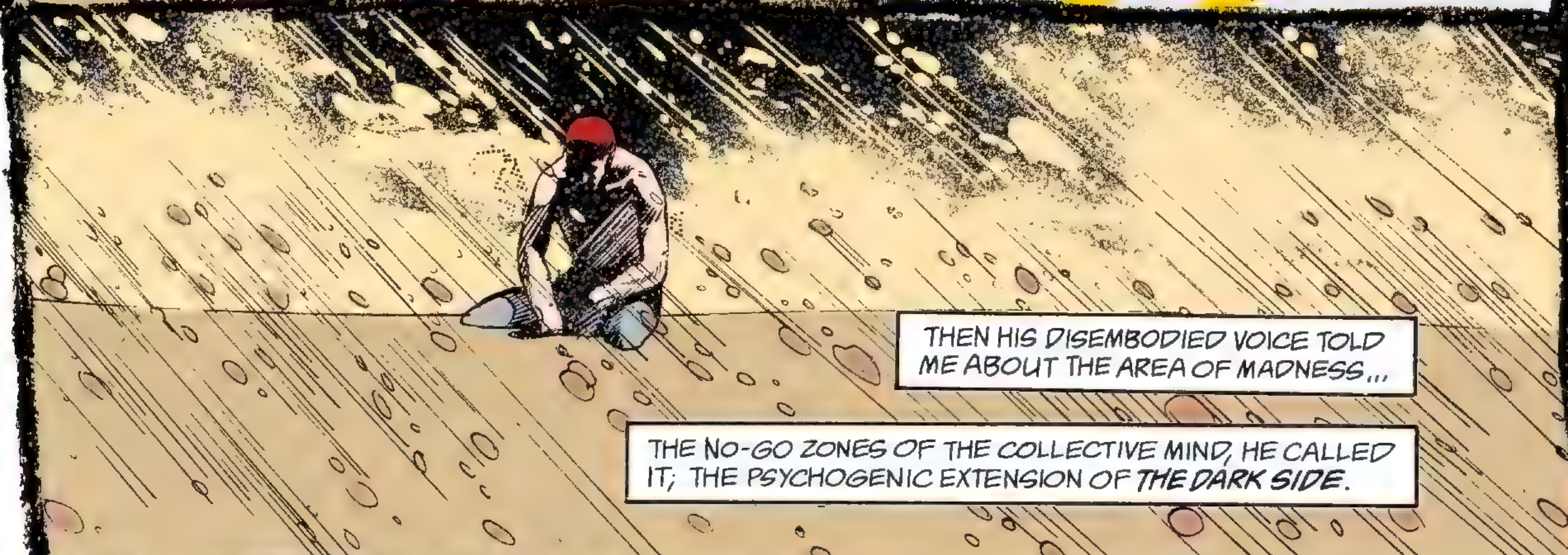


I TRIED FIGHTING, HARNESSSED
THE POWER OF THE **MADNESS**
VEST TO GROW FISTS LIKE
BOULDERS THAT I THREW AT HIM...




HE LAUGHED.

AND DISAPPEARED.



THEN HIS DISEMBODIED VOICE TOLD
ME ABOUT THE AREA OF MADNESS...

THE NO-GO ZONES OF THE COLLECTIVE MIND, HE CALLED
IT; THE PSYCHOGENIC EXTENSION OF **THE DARK SIDE**.



ONCE I KEPT MY MIND OCCUPIED
BY HALLUCINATING. NOW I CAN
NO LONGER DO EVEN THIS.



AND I COME TO REALIZE
I NEVER EXISTED.
HAVE NO MEMORY.
AM NOTHING.

RAIN AND TIME HAVE WASHED
AWAY MY IMAGINATION. THE
MUD IS CAKING MY SOUL...

A BLIND AND
MINDLESS
MOUTH IN
THE MUD.

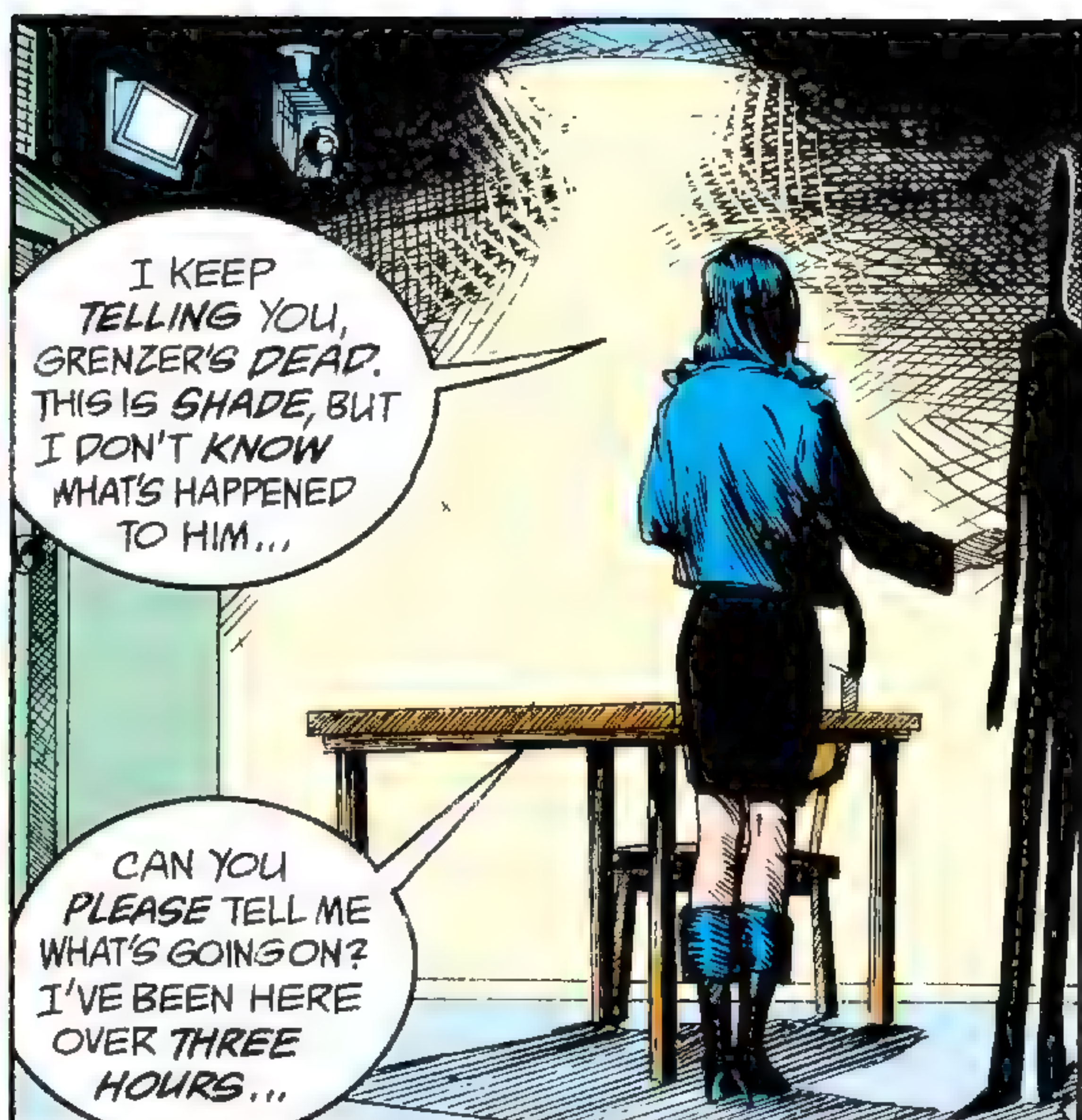
SCREAMING
IN THE DARK.

FOR ALL TIME...



YOU CALLED
HIM **SHADE**.
WHO'S **SHADE**?

WHAT'S
HAPPENED TO
TROY GRENZER?
HOW CAN A MAN TURN
INTO A **SOLID**
SILHOUETTE?



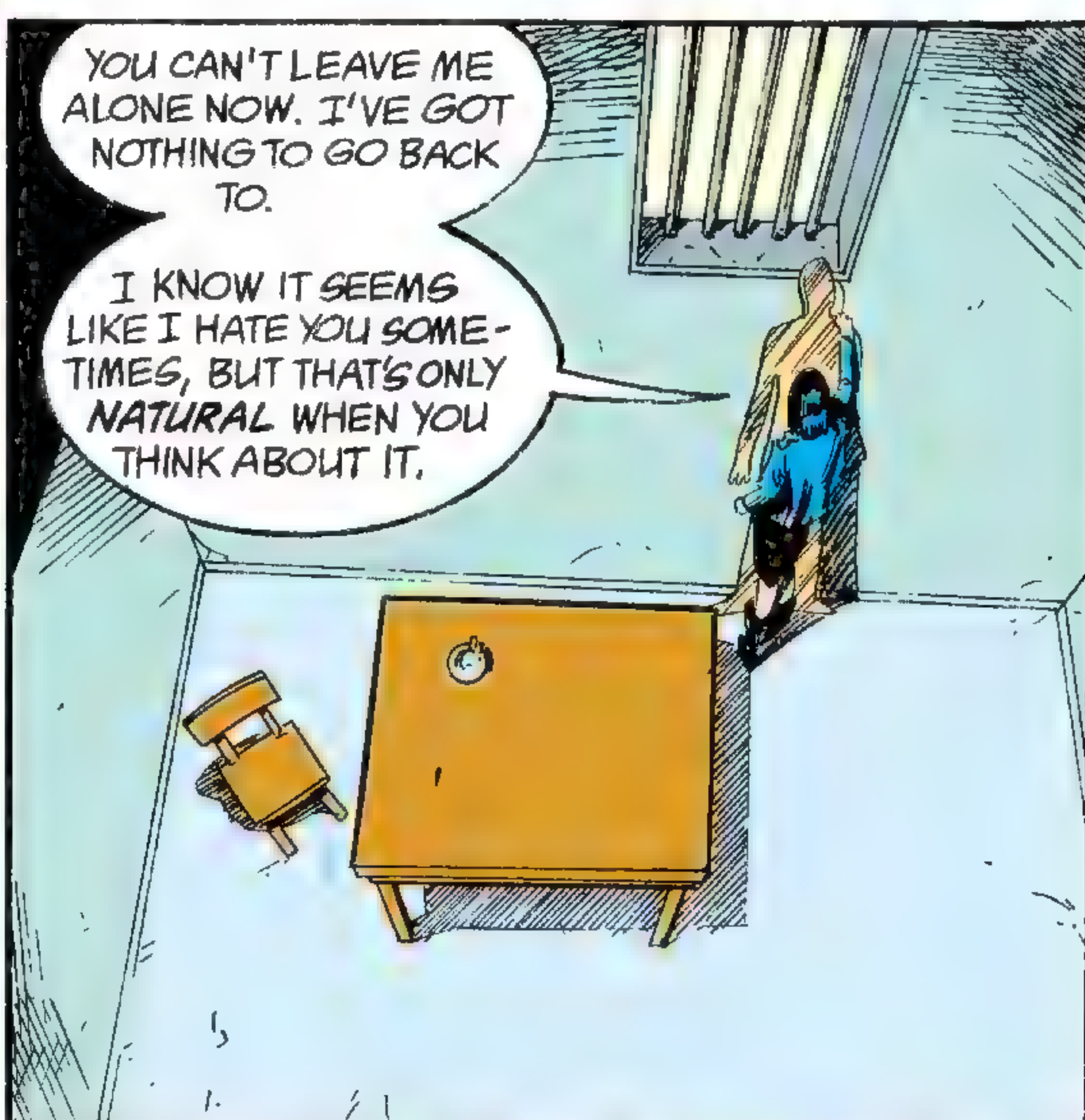
I KEEP
TELLING YOU,
GRENZER'S DEAD.
THIS IS **SHADE**, BUT
I DON'T KNOW
WHAT'S HAPPENED
TO HIM...

CAN YOU
PLEASE TELL ME
WHAT'S GOING ON?
I'VE BEEN HERE
OVER **THREE**
HOURS...



SHE'S GOT A POINT, SIR.
LOCKED UP WITH THAT...
THAT **THING**...

IT DOESN'T
SEEM TO **BOTHER**
HER, CONNOR. I'D
SAY SHE SEEMED
POSITIVELY **FOND**
OF IT...



YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME
ALONE NOW. I'VE GOT
NOTHING TO GO BACK
TO.

I KNOW IT SEEMS
LIKE I HATE YOU SOME-
TIMES, BUT THAT'S ONLY
NATURAL WHEN YOU
THINK ABOUT IT.




YOU'RE ALL I'VE
GOT LEFT, **SHADE**. HOW
ABOUT THAT? IS THAT
FUNNY OR WHAT?



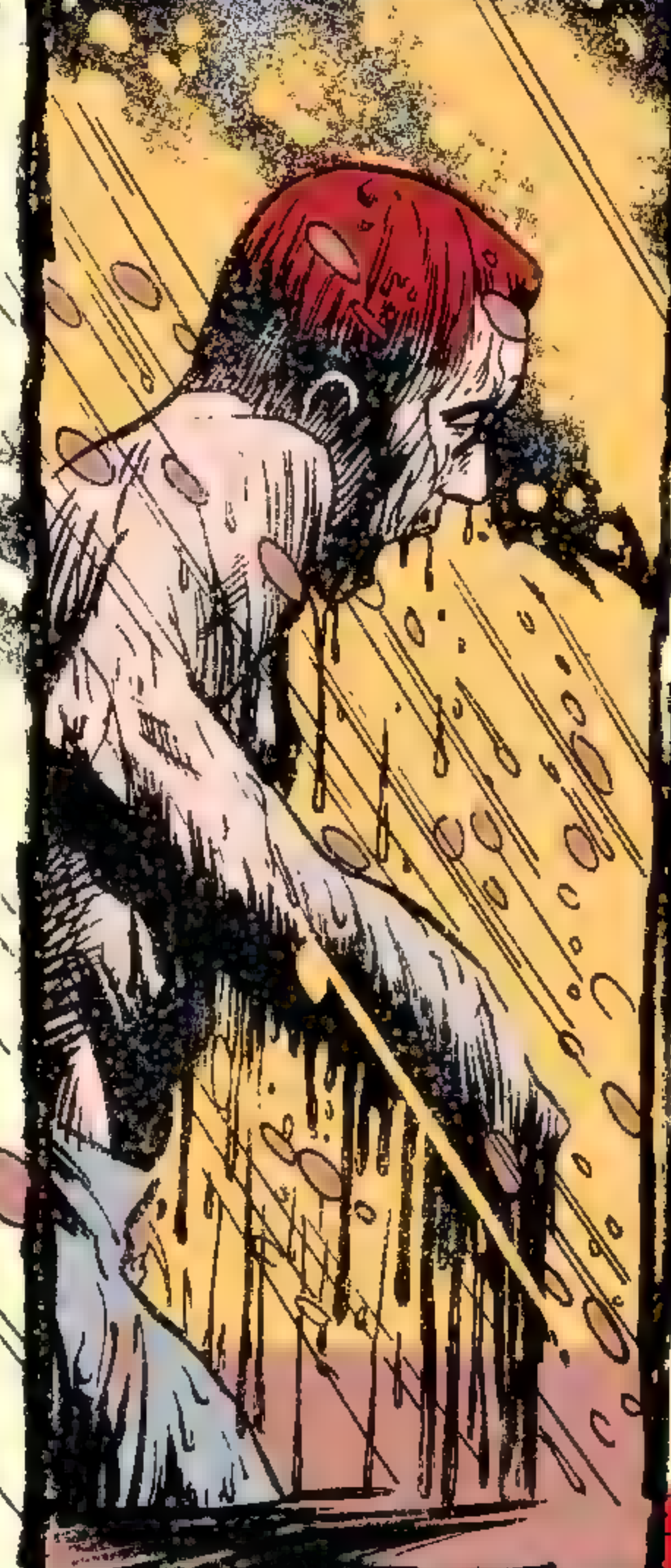
SHADE...

COME
BACK,
SHADE...




SHADE? COME
BACK, SHADE?

OH GOD, THAT
VOICE, HOT SALTY
TEARS BURNING
OPEN MY MUDDY
EYES.




I LIFT MYSELF, MUD MAN,
ME, SHADE. *SHADE.*

MUSTN'T LET HIM WIN. THAT
SWEET VOICE. TELL A STORY
WHILE YOU CRAWL TO KEEP
YOURSELF SANE. YOUR
CONFIRMATION. YES...



AS I FELT THE NOT
UNPLEASANT BURNING IN
MY SCALP, I IMAGINED
SOCIETY BREATHING A
COLLECTIVE SIGH OF
RELIEF...

IMAGINED MYSELF A
LITTLE MARTYR, A
POET TRICKSTER...




I USED TO STARE AT FLOWERS,
RAGE AT DEATH, CRY AT
SUNSETS.

AFTER MY CONFIRMATION
I WAS TOO *SENSIBLE* FOR THAT.
I ENROLLED AT COLLEGE, TOOK
MY OCCUPATIONAL PERSONALITY
TEST, CRIED AT NO MORE
SUNSETS...

I WAS
A DULL LITTLE
BASTARD, LIKE
ALL THE
OTHERS.

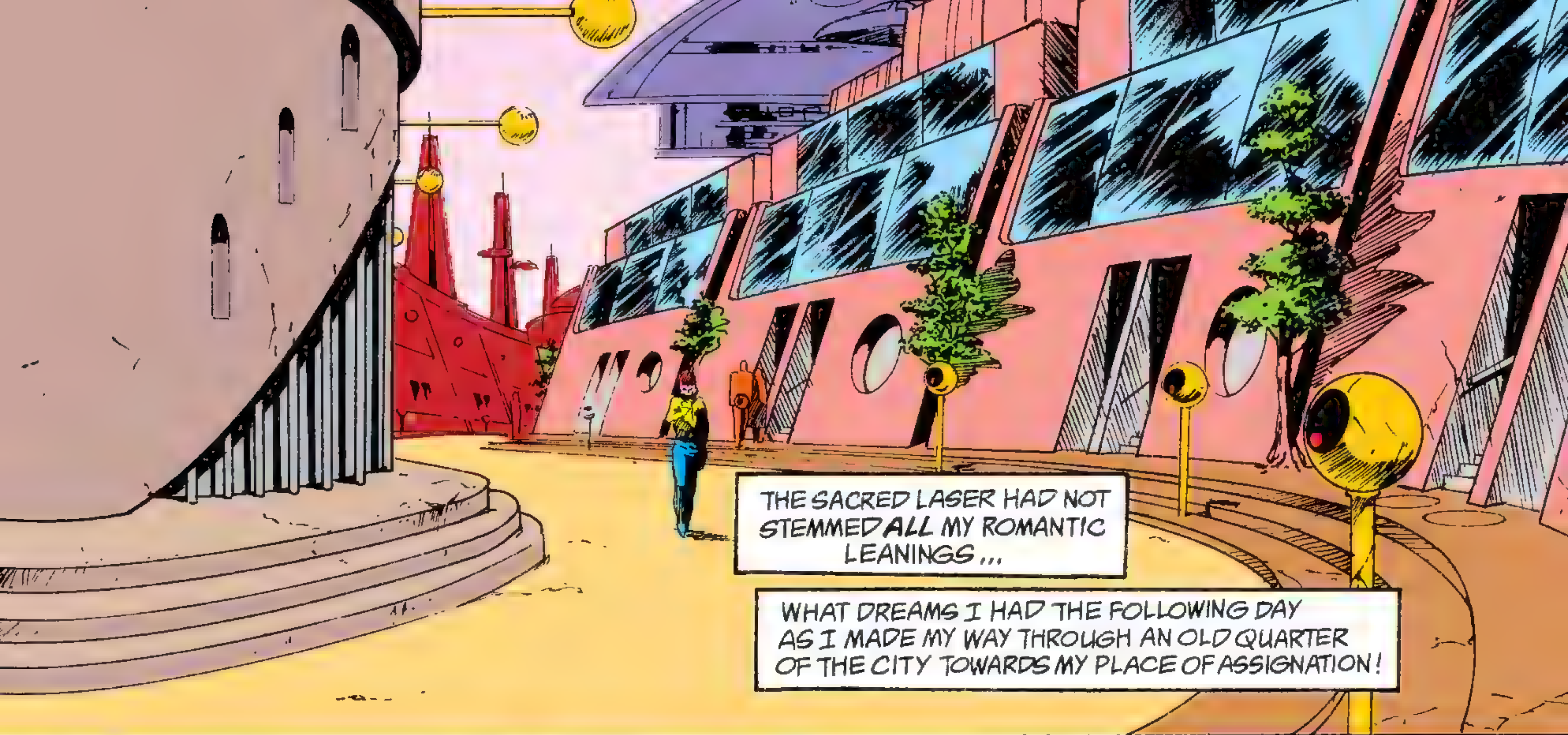
ONLY, NOT *QUITE* LIKE ALL THE OTHERS.
I WAS EIGHTEEN...



REPORT TO THIS ADDRESS 9 A.M.
TOMORROW. FAILURE TO COMPLY
WILL NOT BE ACCEPTABLE.

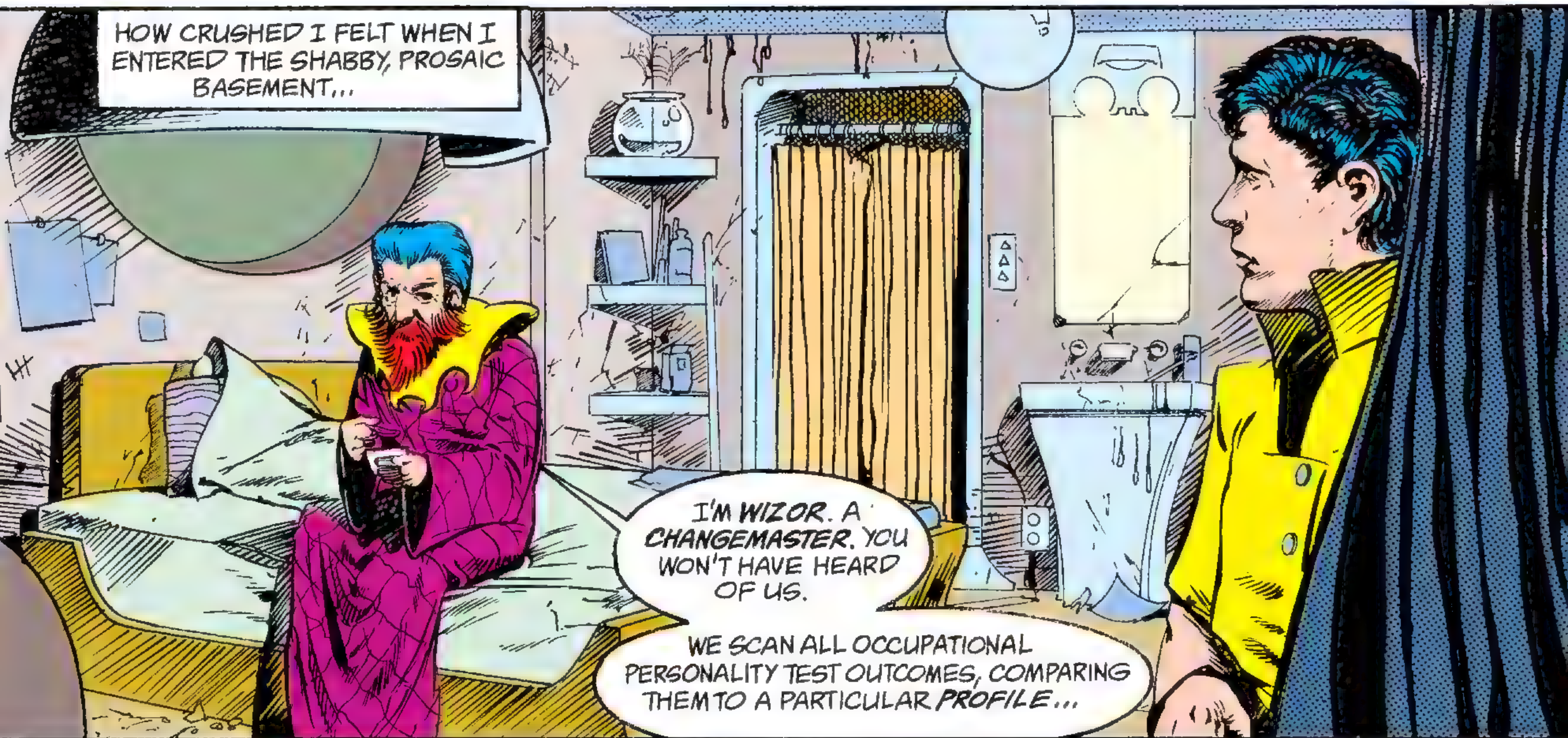
AND DON'T SAY
NOTHING OF THIS,
NOT EVEN TO YOUR
PARENTS...

I WAS AMUSED BY HIS DOUBLE
NEGATIVE, AND POSITIVELY
ENFLAMED BY THE *DELICIOUS*
MYSTERY OF IT ALL...



THE SACRED LASER HAD NOT
STEMMED ALL MY ROMANTIC
LEANINGS ...

WHAT DREAMS I HAD THE FOLLOWING DAY
AS I MADE MY WAY THROUGH AN OLD QUARTER
OF THE CITY TOWARDS MY PLACE OF ASSIGNATION!



HOW CRUSHED I FELT WHEN I
ENTERED THE SHABBY, PROSAIC
BASEMENT...

I'M WIZOR. A
CHANGEMASTER. YOU
WON'T HAVE HEARD
OF US.

WE SCAN ALL OCCUPATIONAL
PERSONALITY TEST OUTCOMES, COMPARING
THEM TO A PARTICULAR PROFILE...



YOU'RE ONE OF THE EXCEPTIONS WHO
MATCHES OUR PROFILE PERFECTLY.
YOU HAVE THEREFORE BEEN RECRUITED
AS A CHANGING MAN, A MIND
AGENT.

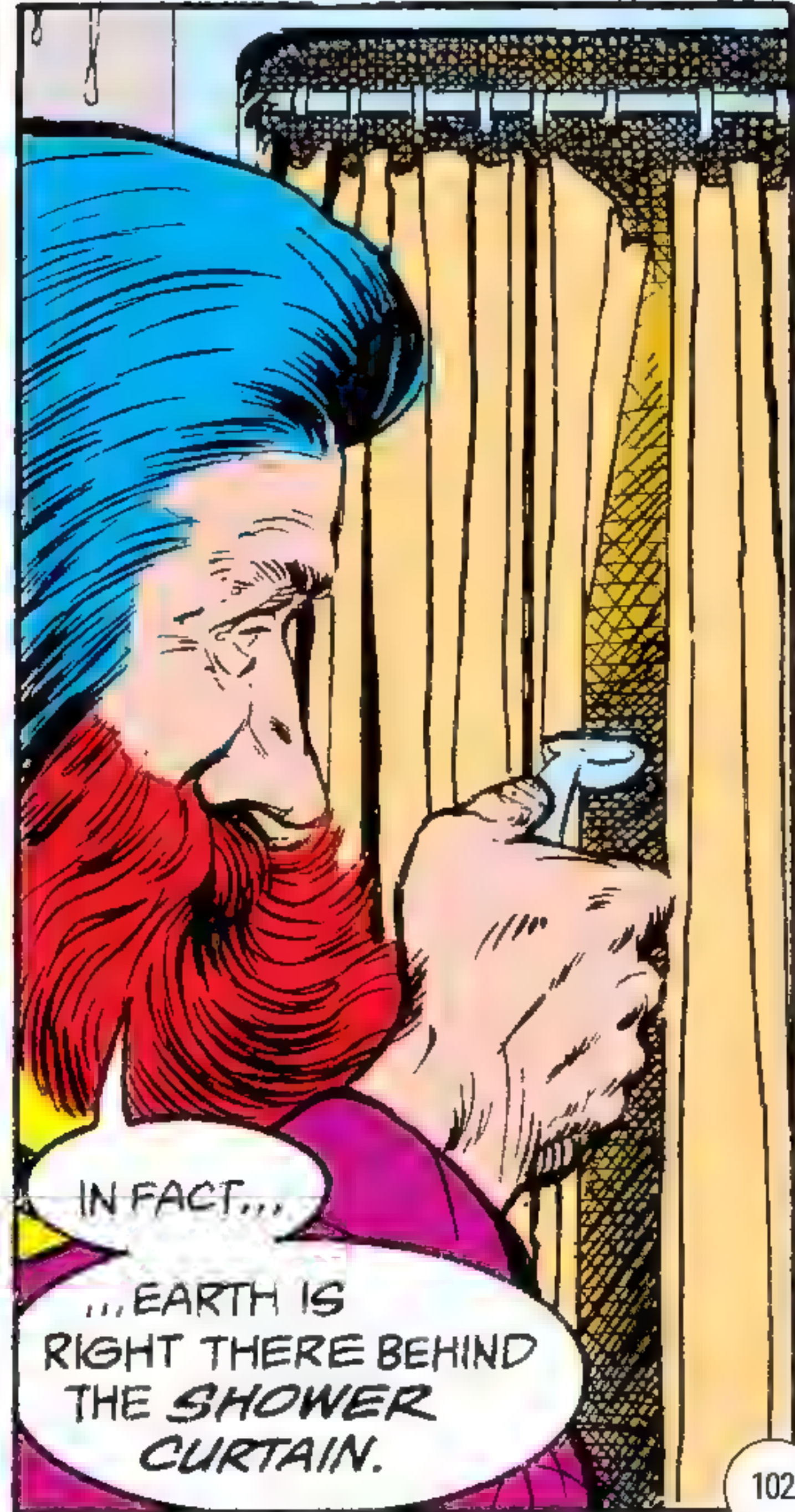
HAVE YOU
EVER HEARD
OF PLANET
EARTH?



EARTH? AH, NO. YES. I
THINK SO. A CHILDREN'S
BOOK? MAYBE A
FAIRY TALE...

WHAT'S EARTH
GOT TO DO WITH...

EARTH IS NO
FAIRY TALE, SHADE.
EARTH EXISTS.



IN FACT...
...EARTH IS
RIGHT THERE BEHIND
THE **SHOWER
CURTAIN.**

AT LEAST, ACCESS TO AND FROM EARTH. SEE THE SLIGHT BENDING OF LIGHT? THE ODDLY CREASED TILES? IT'S IN A CONSTANT STATE OF FLUX, LINKING META WITH EARTH...

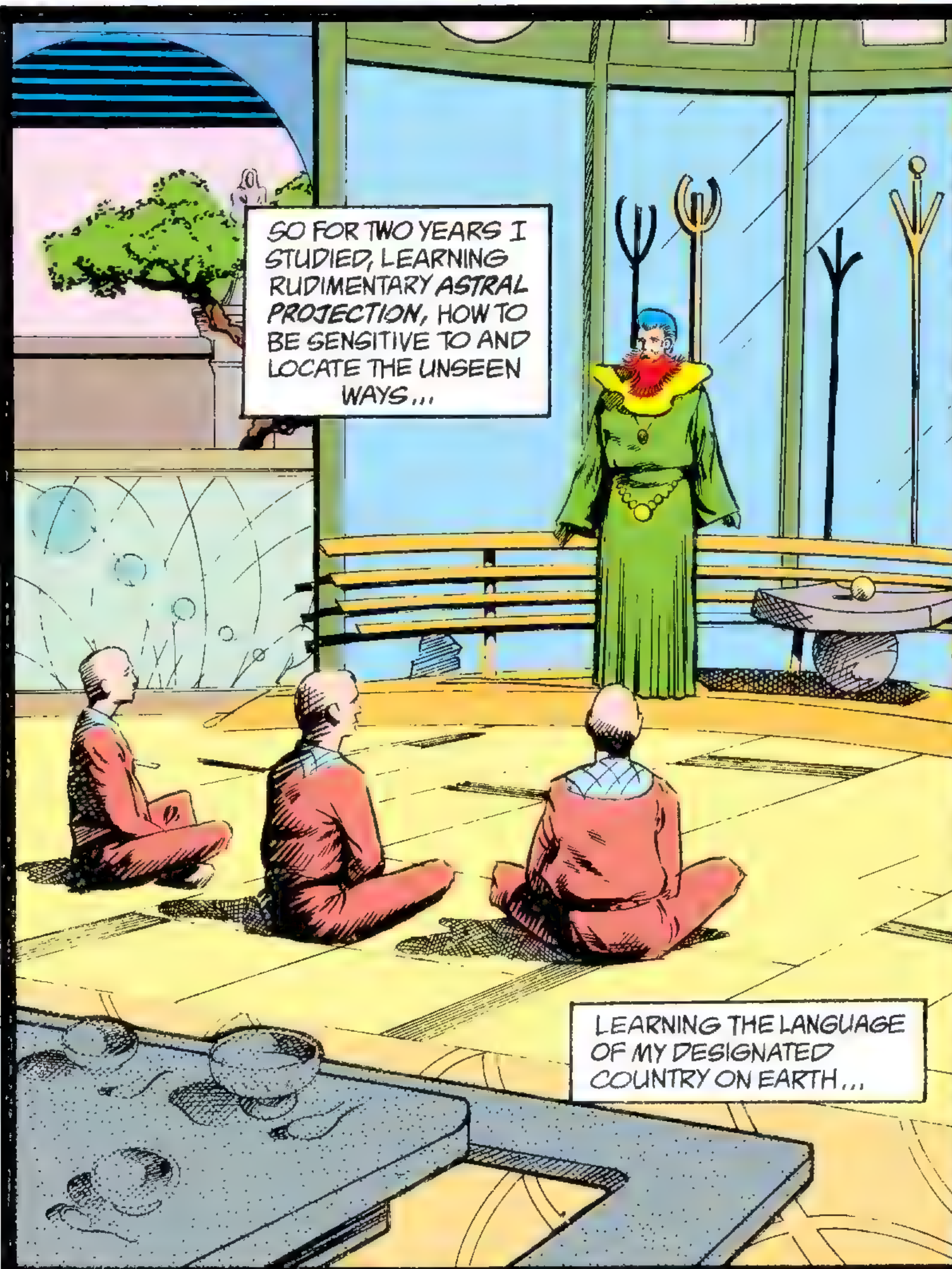
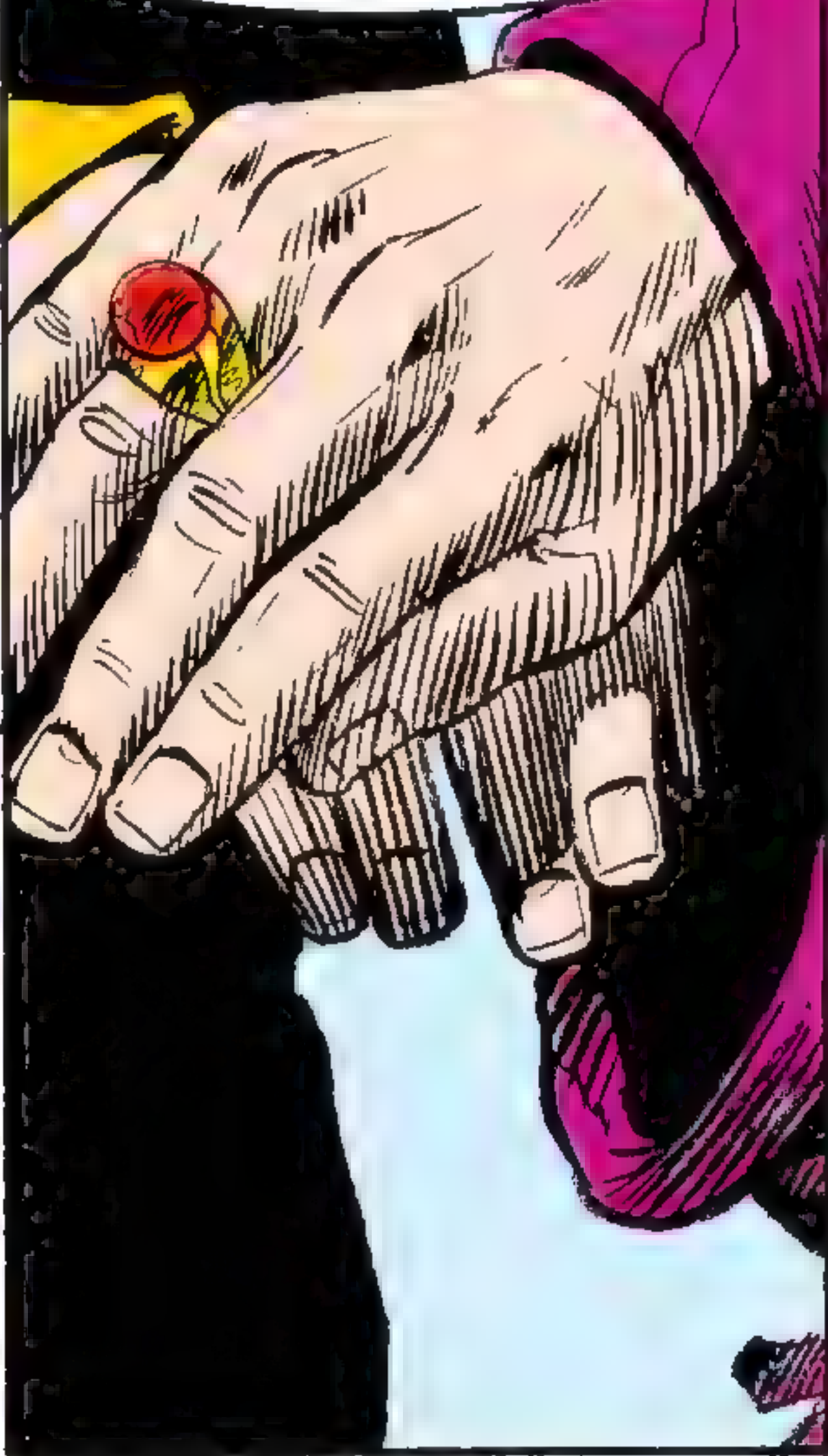


THE UNSEEN WAYS. THAT SOUNDS...SO BEAUTIFUL...



AH! AH! NOT YET! BEFORE YOU ENTER AN UNSEEN WAY, YOU MUST BE PREPARED.

YOUR TRAINING, YOUR NEW LIFE, BEGINS TOMORROW...



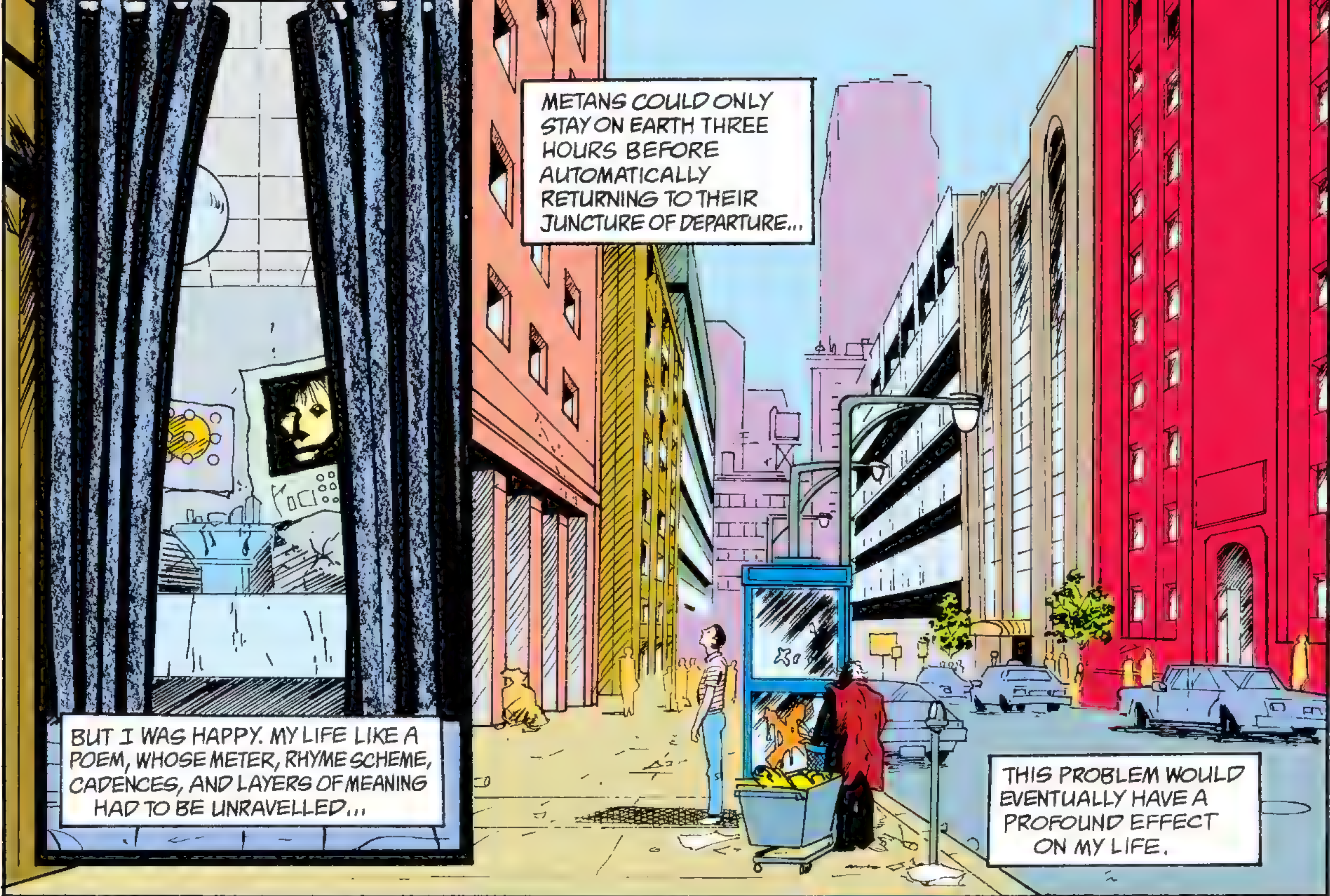
SO FOR TWO YEARS I STUDIED, LEARNING RUDIMENTARY ASTRAL PROJECTION, HOW TO BE SENSITIVE TO AND LOCATE THE UNSEEN WAYS...

LEARNING THE LANGUAGE OF MY DESIGNATED COUNTRY ON EARTH...



THE CHANGEMASTERS OPERATED ON A PRINCIPAL OF IGNORANCE, ONLY TELLING YOU JUST ENOUGH, NEVER MORE...

WHEN I SET OFF FOR MY FIRST JOURNEY TO EARTH I STILL DIDN'T KNOW WHY THE CHANGEMASTERS EXISTED, OR WHAT MY PURPOSE WAS...

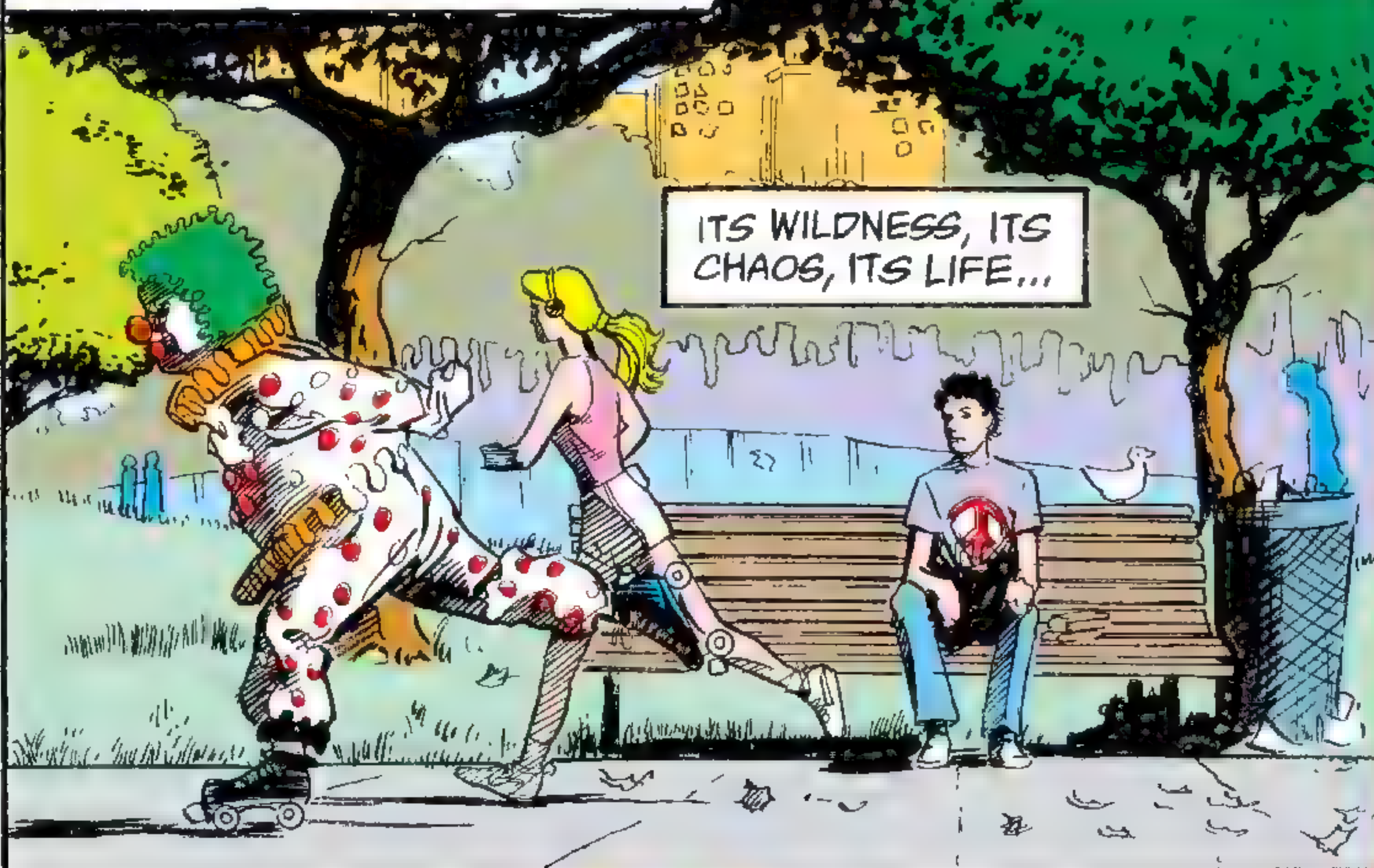


METANS COULD ONLY STAY ON EARTH THREE HOURS BEFORE AUTOMATICALLY RETURNING TO THEIR JUNCTURE OF DEPARTURE...

BUT I WAS HAPPY. MY LIFE LIKE A POEM, WHOSE METER, RHYME SCHEME, CADENCES, AND LAYERS OF MEANING HAD TO BE UNRAVELLED...

THIS PROBLEM WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE A PROFOUND EFFECT ON MY LIFE.

MY FIRST TRIPS I SPENT SEEKING OUT POETRY. HOW I LOVED EARTH! THE LITERATURE, THE ART, THE WOMEN ...



ITS WILDNESS, ITS CHAOS, ITS LIFE...

YOUR LIFE WILL NOW CHANGE, MY SON. FOR THE NEXT YEAR YOUR MOVEMENTS WILL BE RESTRICTED.

STRANGE DAYS ARE APPROACHING. DAYS OF CHANGE.

IT WILL BE YOUR TASK TO SEE THAT THESE CHANGES ARE NOT HARMFUL TO META...

WIZOR, YOU'VE BEEN MY TEACHER FOR TWO YEARS, BUT THERE'S SO MUCH I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT IS EARTH?

HOW ARE EARTH AND META RELATED?



I'VE HEARD TALK OF AN AREA OF MADNESS, BETWEEN EARTH AND META. SOME OF OUR AGENTS FALL INTO IT, NEVER RETURNING.

AND WHAT DO WE AGENTS DO, ANYWAY? NO ONE TELLS ME ANYTHING!

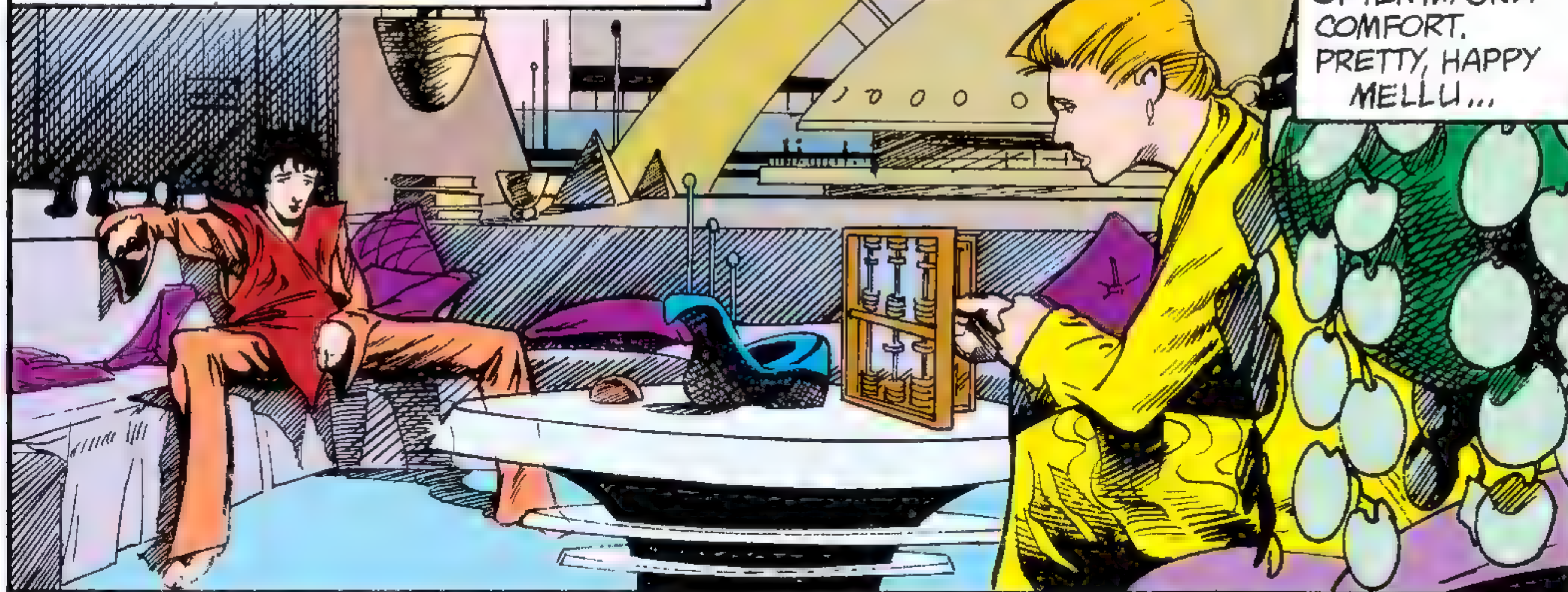


WE'D RATHER YOU DISCOVER AND WORK OUT THINGS FOR YOURSELF. THIS WILL GIVE YOU GREATER FLEXIBILITY OF THOUGHT AND ACTION.

I'LL SAY ONLY THAT THERE ARE NO SACRED LASERS ON EARTH. HUMANS HARBOR A MADNESS, THE AREA OF MADNESS IS A PRODUCT OF THIS, ONLY MUTATED...

AND THIS IS A THREAT TO US ALL. IT'S LEAKING INTO OUR OWN PLANET.

AND THAT'S ALL I GOT, EVER, FOR THE NEXT YEAR I WAS KEPT LOCKED UP OR FOLLOWED OR PROHIBITED FROM CERTAIN AREAS.



MY FIANCÉE, **MELLU**, WAS OFTEN MY ONLY COMFORT. PRETTY, HAPPY MELLU...

I MANAGED ONCE TO GET AN OLDER MIND AGENT DRUNK, IN A BAR OF SHADOWS AFTER LOSING MY OWN SHADOWS...



WHAT D'WE DO? WE'RE WALKING SACRED LASERS, BOY. WE GET TO EARTH, FIND SOMEONE WHO SEEMS A LITTLE MAD... AND THEN...

...OPERATE...

A BIT CRUDE, OF COURSE. PLACE A DEPRESSOR AGAINST THEIR TEMPLES. PULL THE TRIGGER. **FZZZZT**.



PATIENT'S A LITTLE STUPID, A LOT OF HIS WIRING'S MELTED, BUT HE'S SANE...

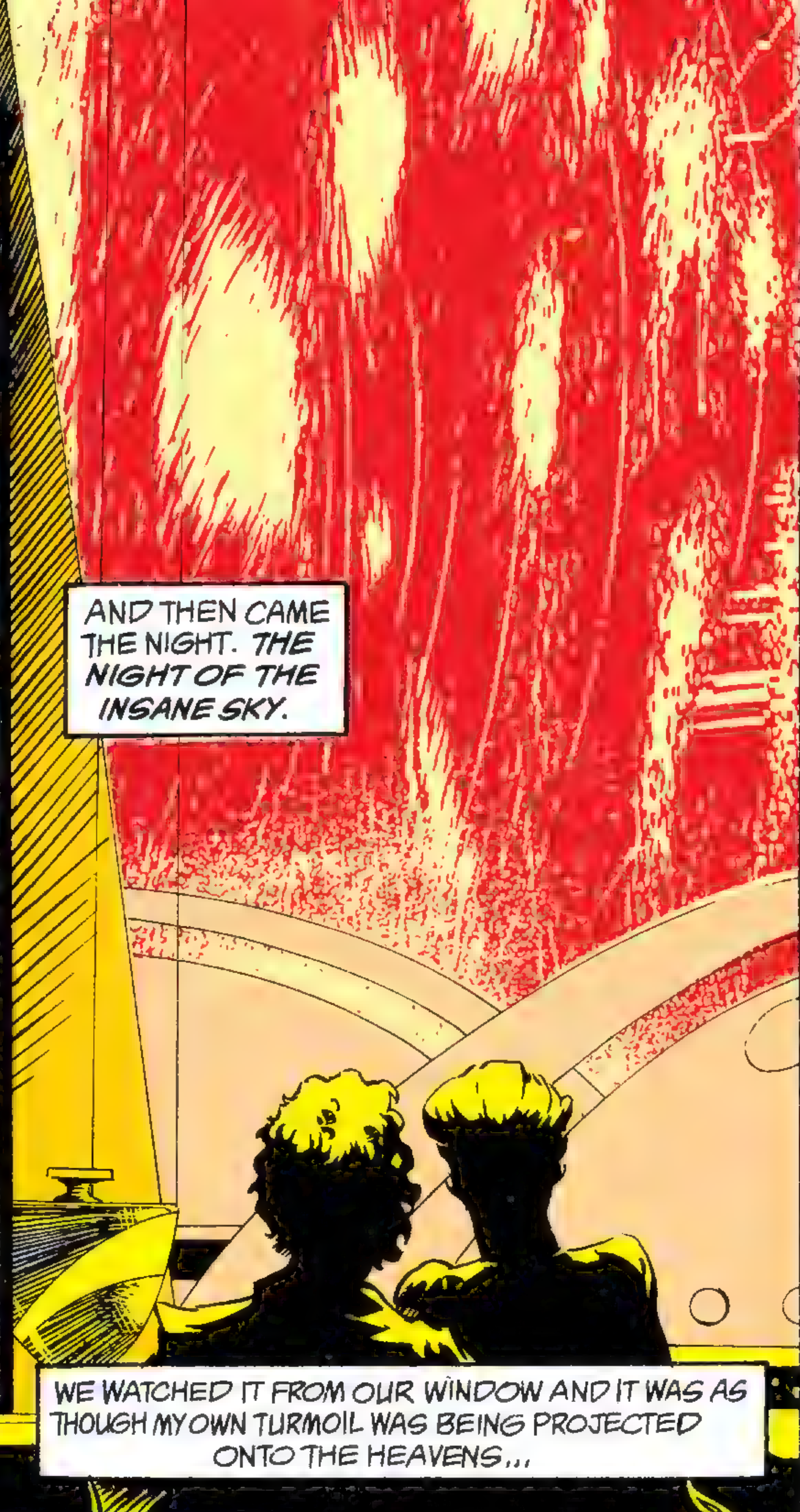
MY GOD. THAT'S TERRIBLE...

THAT WAS THE LAST
I SAW OF HIM...



FOR THE NEXT THREE
MONTHS I WAS CONFINED
TO *QUARTERS*...

AND THEN CAME
THE NIGHT. *THE
NIGHT OF THE
INSANE SKY.*



WE WATCHED IT FROM OUR WINDOW AND IT WAS AS
THOUGH MY OWN TURMOIL WAS BEING PROJECTED
ONTO THE HEAVENS...

RUMORS REACHED ME THAT AN AGENT
HAD BEEN RETRIEVED FROM THE *AREA
OF MADNESS*, AND THE NIGHT OF THE
INSANE SKY WAS *HIS* DOING...

AND THEN WIZOR,
WHO I HADN'T SEEN
FOR THREE MONTHS,
APPEARED...



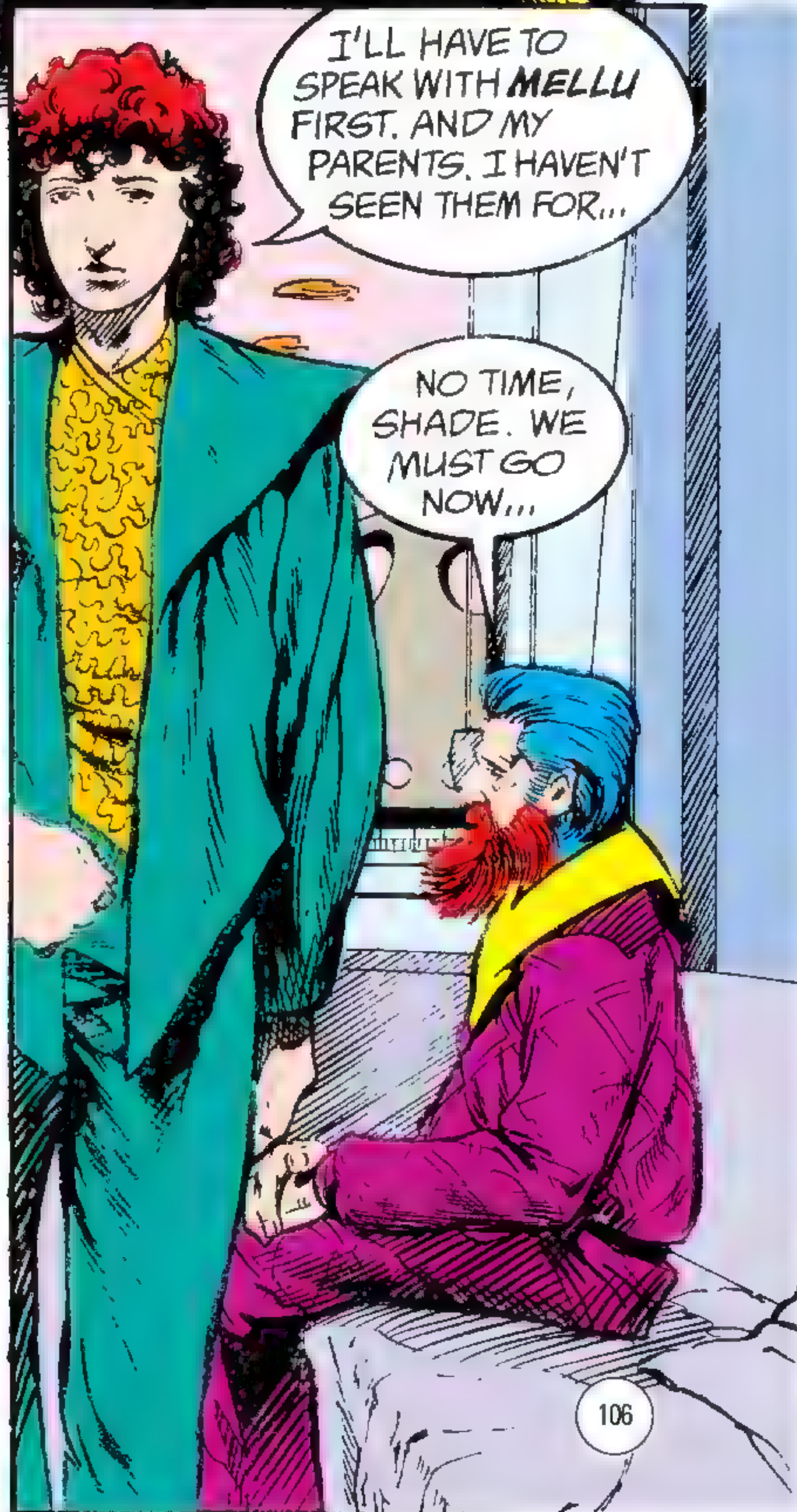
THE TIME IS NOW,
SHADE. WE'VE DEVISED
A WAY TO KEEP AN AGENT
ON EARTH INDEFINITELY.

YOU'LL STAY THERE
FOR THREE MONTHS AND
FIGHT THE MADNESS. AFTER
THAT YOU'LL RETURN TO
META. FREE TO DO
WHAT YOU WISH...



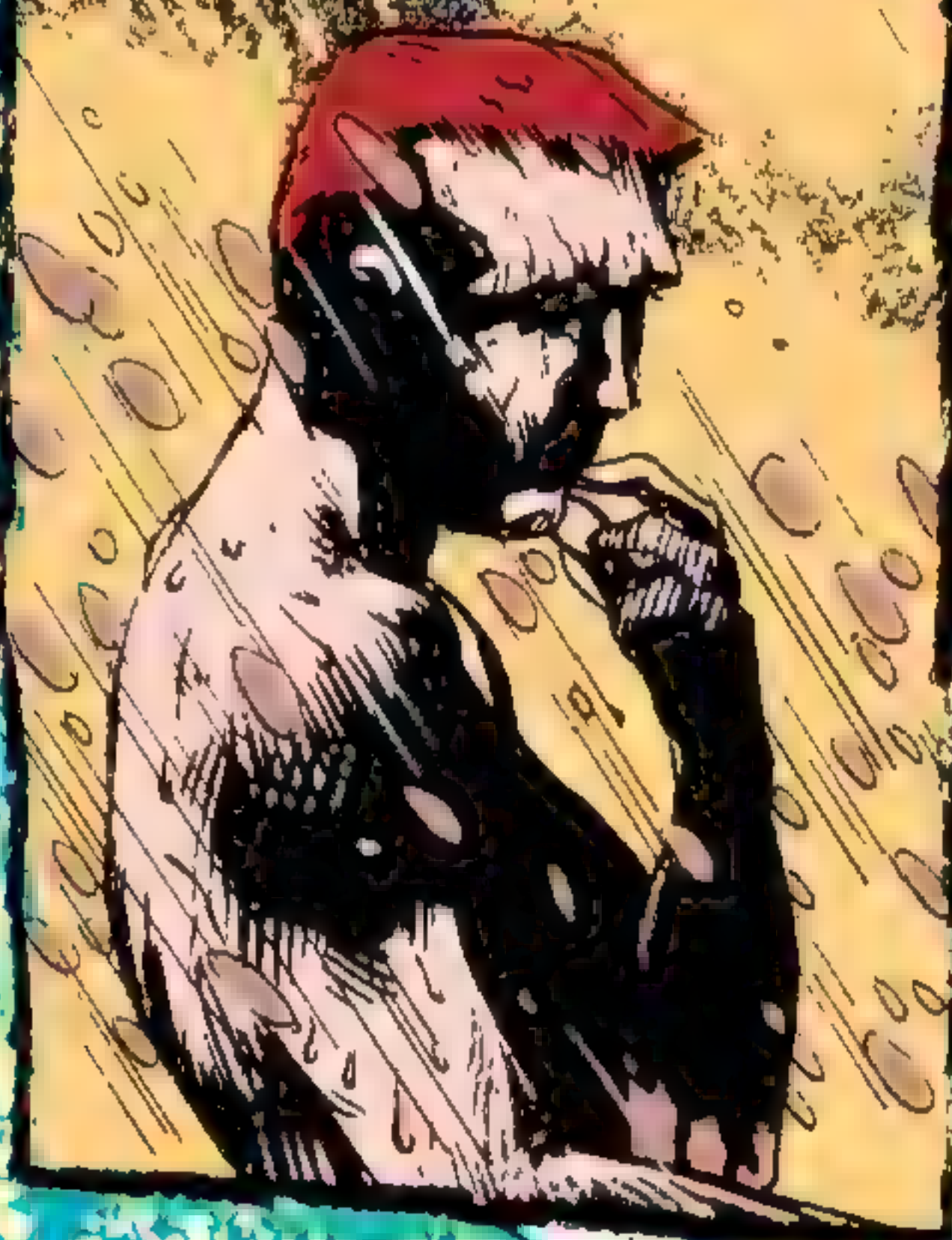
I'LL HAVE TO
SPEAK WITH *MELLU*
FIRST. AND MY
PARENTS. I HAVEN'T
SEEN THEM FOR...

NO TIME,
SHADE. WE
MUST GO
NOW...



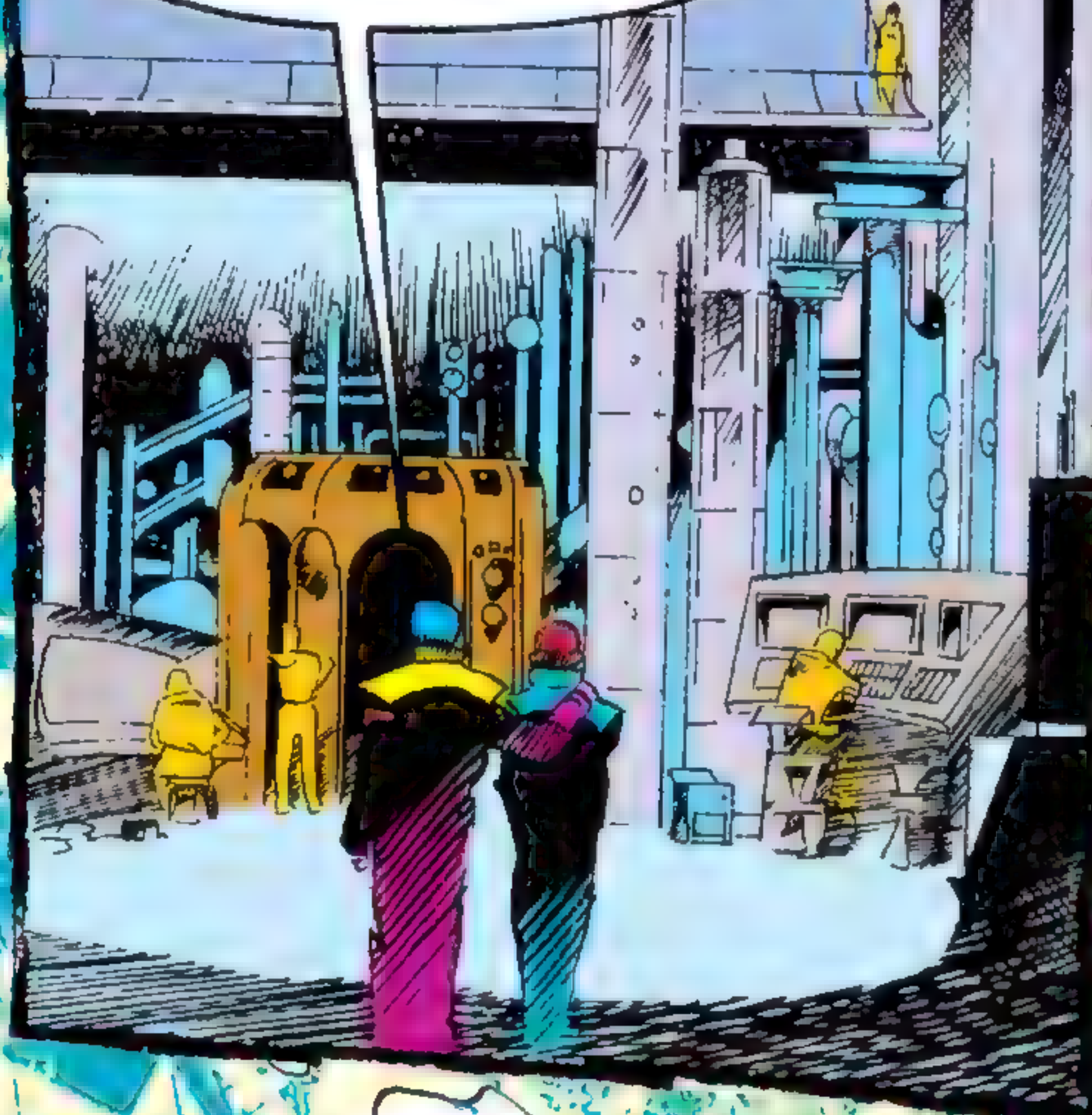
I MUST HAVE BEEN DRUGGED THAT MORNING. I WENT ALONG LIKE A ZOMBIE TO THE **DEEP CULTURE TANK**.

WISOR TOLD ME I'D BE SENT TO **THE AREA OF MADNESS**, FROM WHERE I'D TAKE OVER A **HUMAN BODY...**



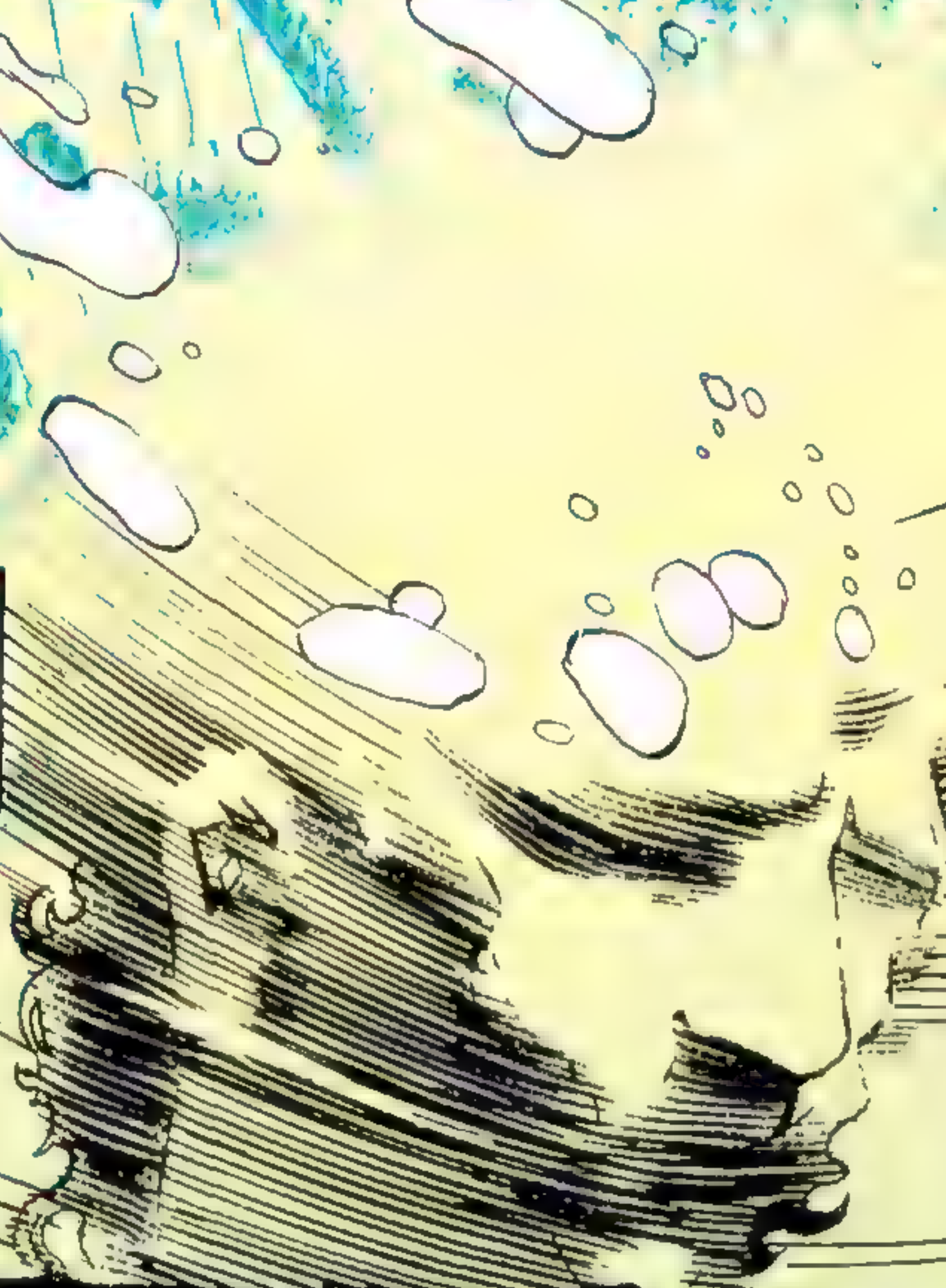
LEAVE YOUR BODY USING YOUR **ASTRAL PROJECTION**. NO FEAR, YOUR **REAL BODY** WILL BE **PERFECTLY SAFE**, AWAITING YOUR RETURN.

A HUMAN HAS BEEN CHOSEN WHO'D DIE ANYWAY. A CONVICTED KILLER CALLED **GRENZER**. WE KNOW HOW **SENSITIVE** YOU ARE.



I SPENT AN HOUR IN THE TANK, IMMERSED IN **SUBLIMINAL POOLS OF INFORMATION...**

... A RAPID TIDE OF VOICES, SOUNDS, PICTURES, SMELLS SURGING THROUGH THE RIVERS OF MY **NEUROSCAPE...**

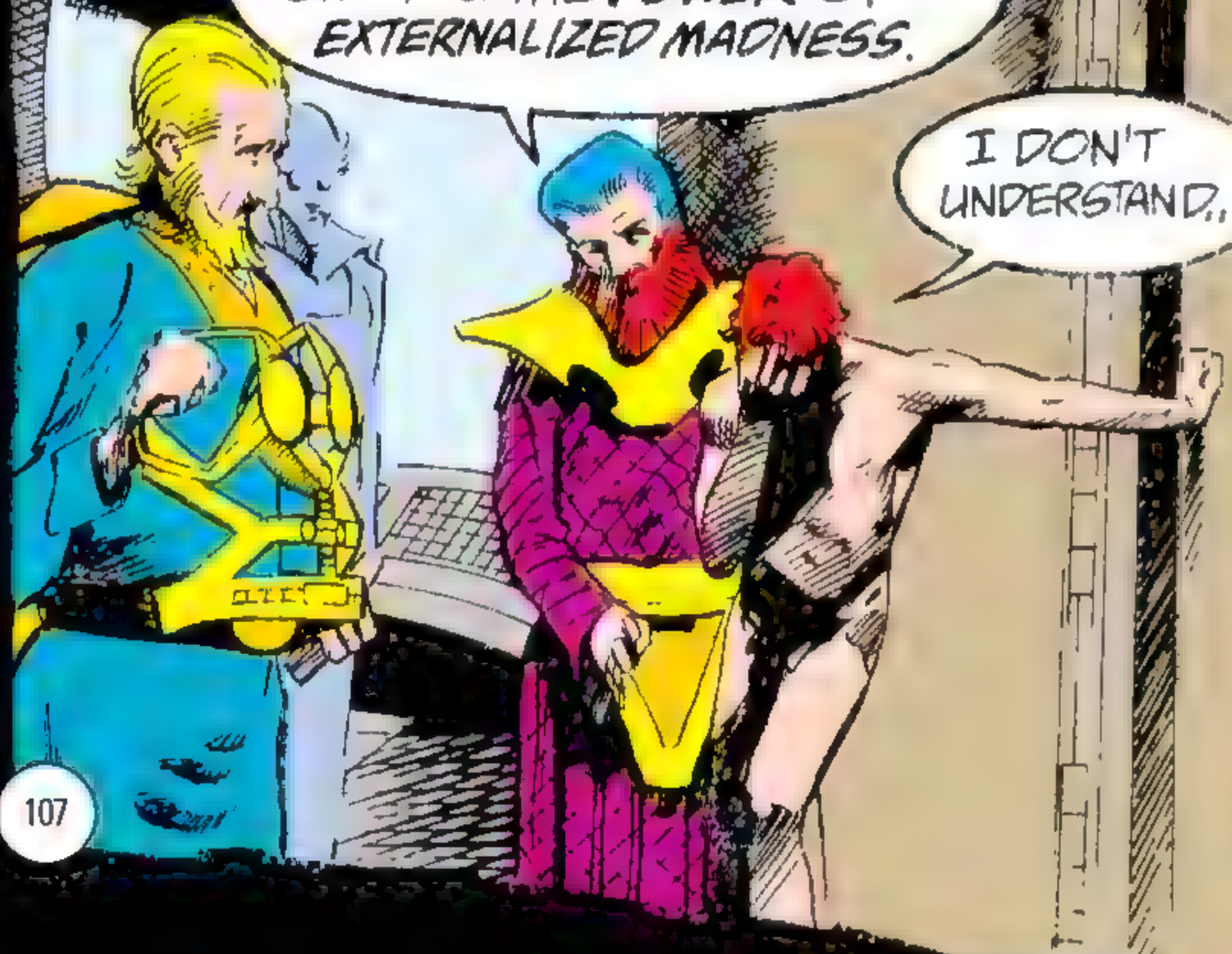


... AMERICA RUN THROUGH ME UNTIL I COULD THINK, BREATHE AND SPEAK LIKE AN AMERICAN.

THIS WAS DESIGNED FOR YOU, TO BECOME PART OF YOUR **LIFEFORCE**, DISTINCT FROM YOUR **CORPOREAL BODY**.

THE **MADNESS VEST**. IT WILL GIVE YOU THE **POWER OF EXTERNALIZED MADNESS**.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

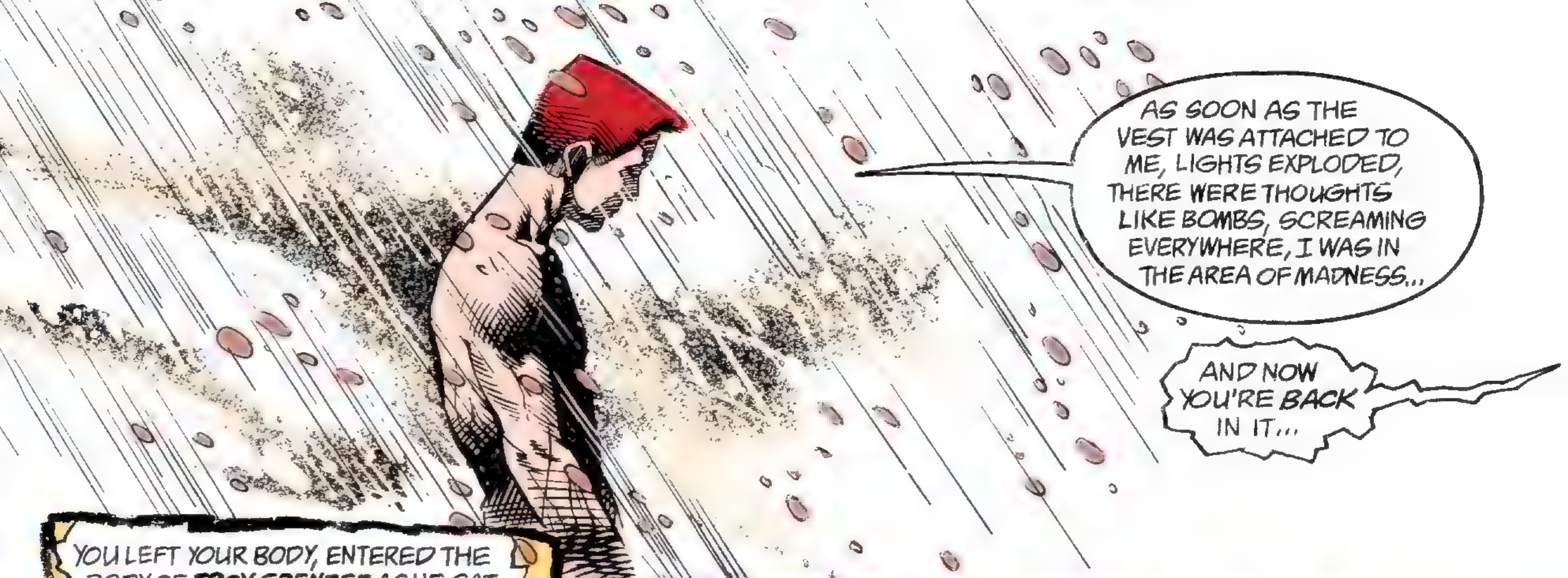


THE **MADNESS** IS CONTAGIOUS, SHADE. YOU MUST FIGHT IT.

BE A **POET OF INSANITY**. CREATE **FREE VERSE** WITH REALITY, ON THE **SMITHY** OF YOUR SOUL. YOU LIKE USING THAT TERM.

FORGE WHATEVER CHANGE IS NEEDED ON THE **SMITHY** OF YOUR SOUL...





AS SOON AS THE VEST WAS ATTACHED TO ME, LIGHTS EXPLODED, THERE WERE THOUGHTS LIKE BOMBS, SCREAMING EVERYWHERE, I WAS IN THE AREA OF MADNESS...

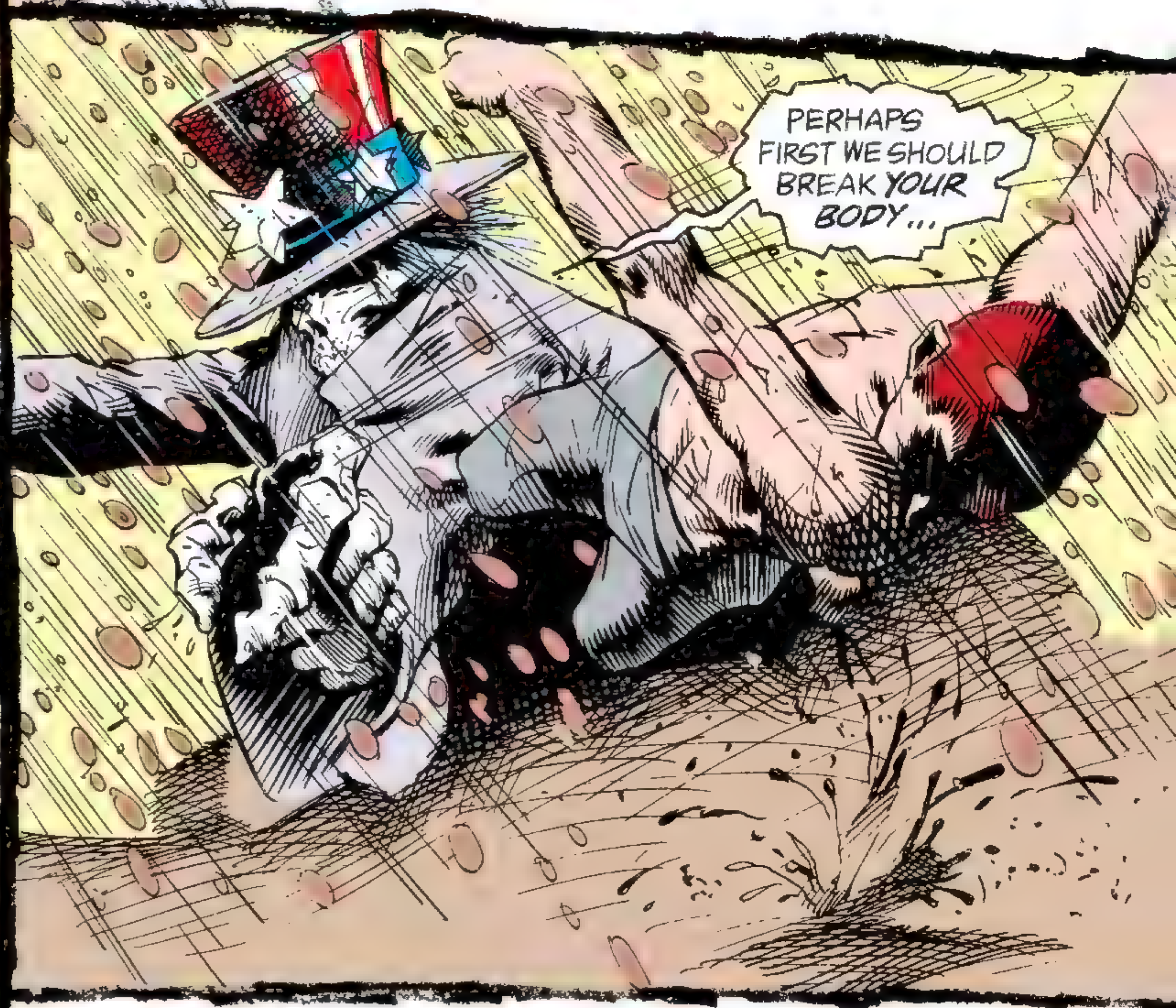
AND NOW YOU'RE BACK IN IT...



YOU LEFT YOUR BODY, ENTERED THE BODY OF TROY GRENZER AS HE SAT ON THE ELECTRIC CHAIR...

YOU REALLY ARE SURPRISING, SHADE. STRONGER WILLED THAN I THOUGHT.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO BREAK YOUR MIND, HMMM?



PERHAPS FIRST WE SHOULD BREAK YOUR BODY...



A POET OF INSANITY. LEAP INTO THE DARK, FORGE WHATEVER CHANGE IS NEEDED...

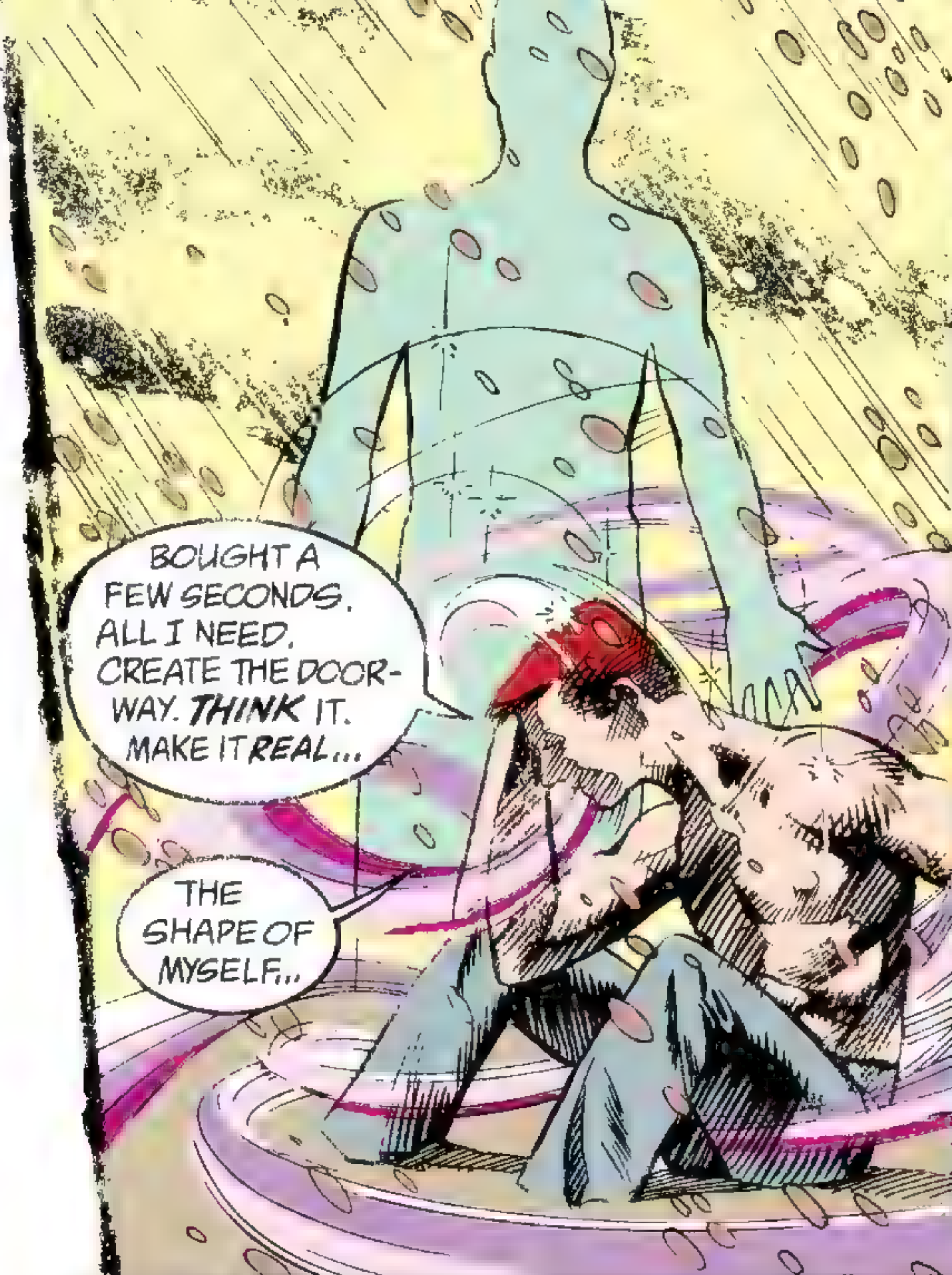
YES. YES.

CHANGE...



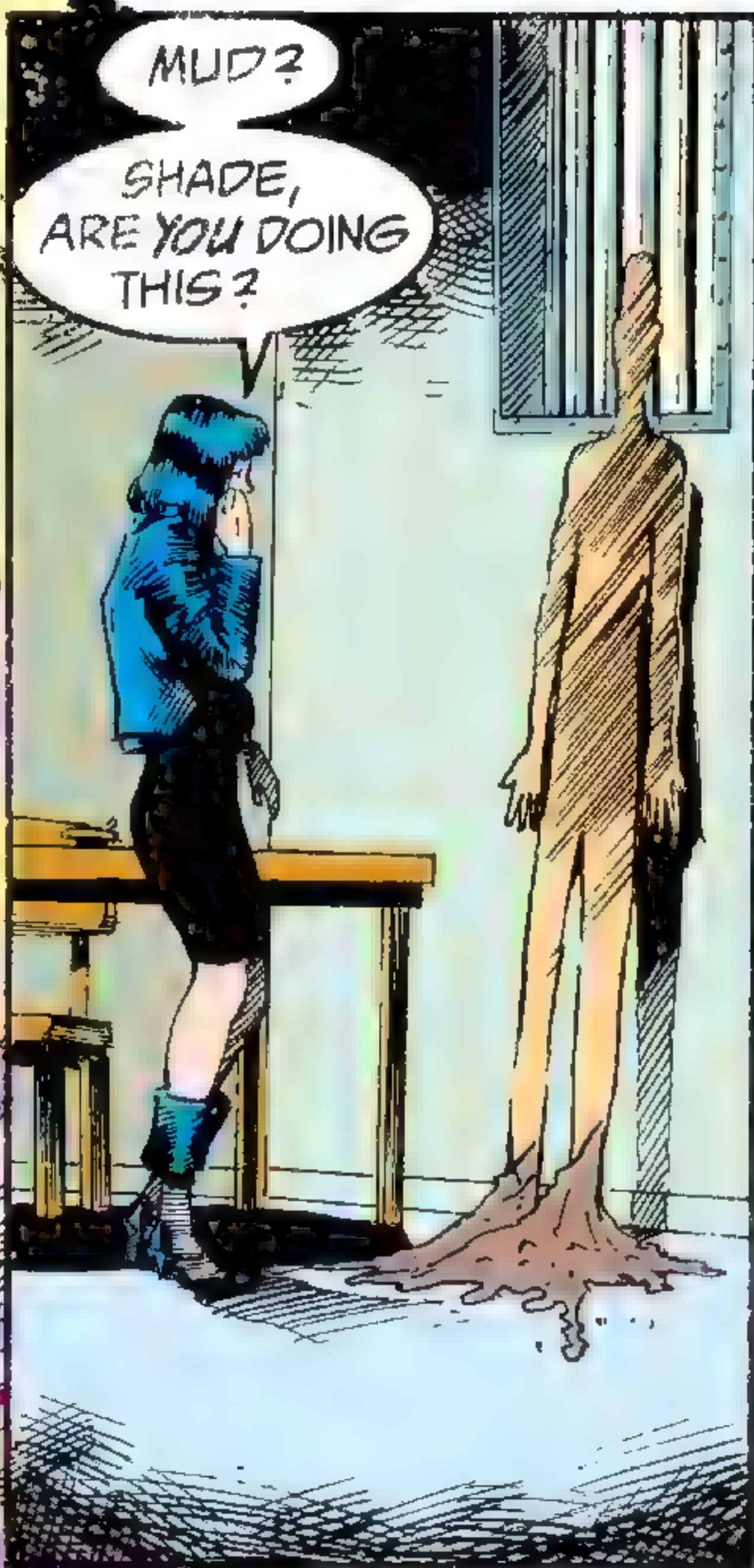
...YOURSELF, SCREAM.

LOOK AT YOURSELF AND SCREAM...

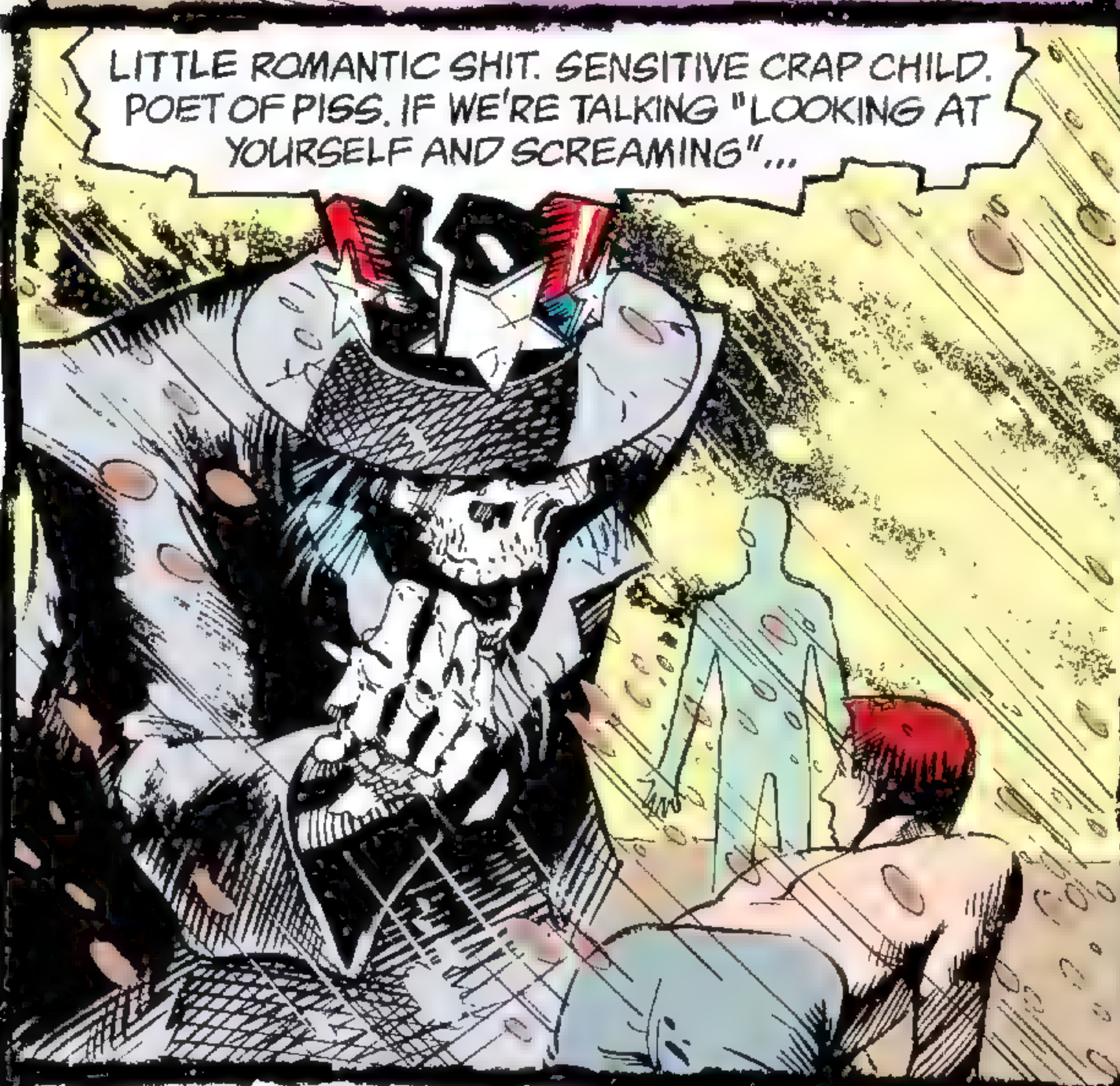


BOUGHT A FEW SECONDS. ALL I NEED. CREATE THE DOORWAY. **THINK IT. MAKE IT REAL...**

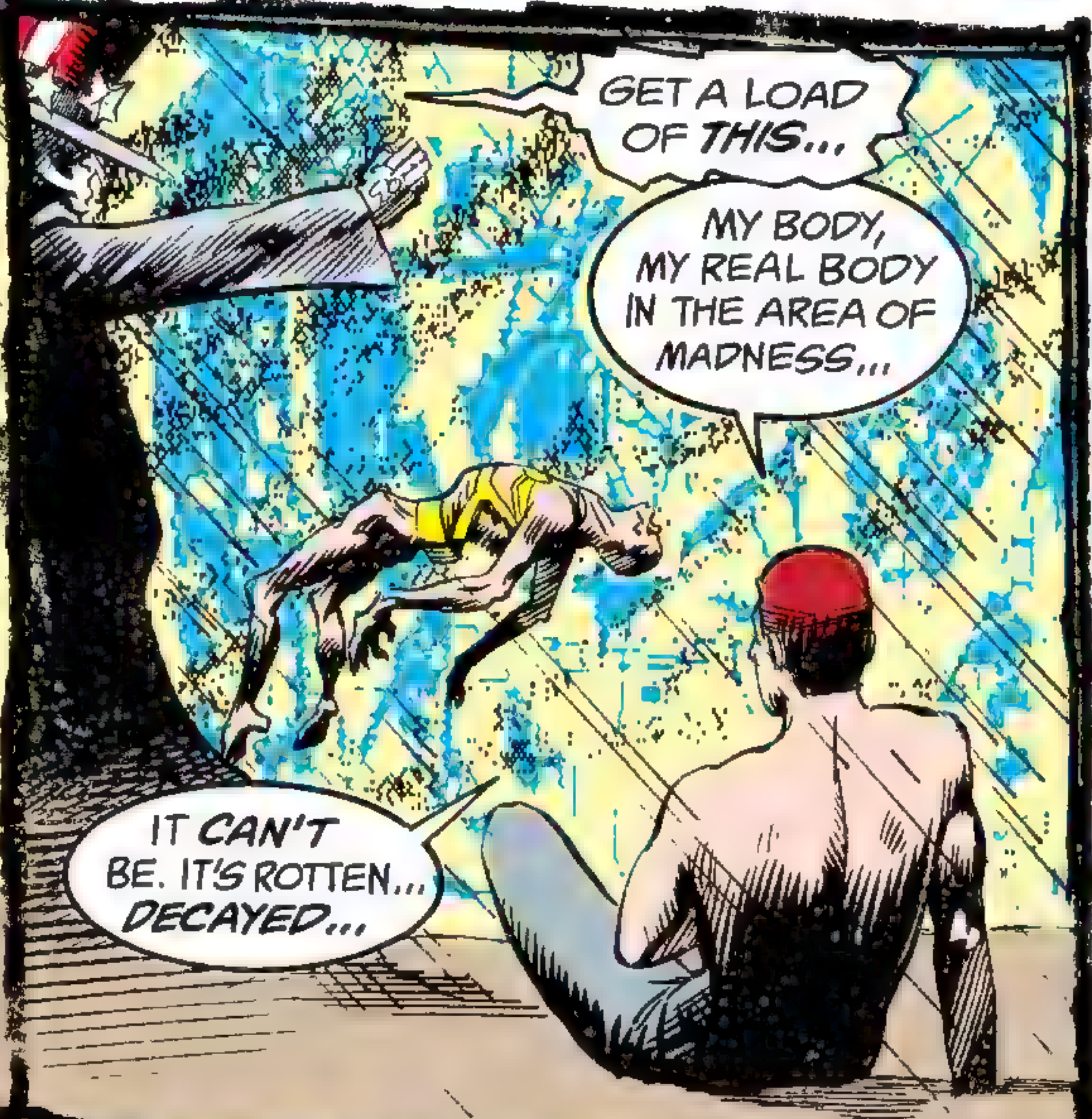
THE SHAPE OF MYSELF...



MUD?
SHADE, ARE YOU DOING THIS?



LITTLE ROMANTIC SHIT. SENSITIVE CRAP CHILD. POET OF PISS. IF WE'RE TALKING "LOOKING AT YOURSELF AND SCREAMING"...



GET A LOAD OF THIS...

MY BODY, MY REAL BODY IN THE AREA OF MADNESS...

IT CAN'T BE. IT'S ROTTEN... DECAYED...



IDIOT. THE CHANGEMASTERS BETRAYED YOU. WIZOR CONDEMNED YOU. YOUR REAL BODY IS DEAD. YOU'VE NO WAY BACK.

YOU'RE STUCK FOREVER IN THE BODY OF **TROY GRENZER**, MASS KILLER. YOUR SENSITIVE SOUL WRAPPED IN A BUTCHER'S APRON.

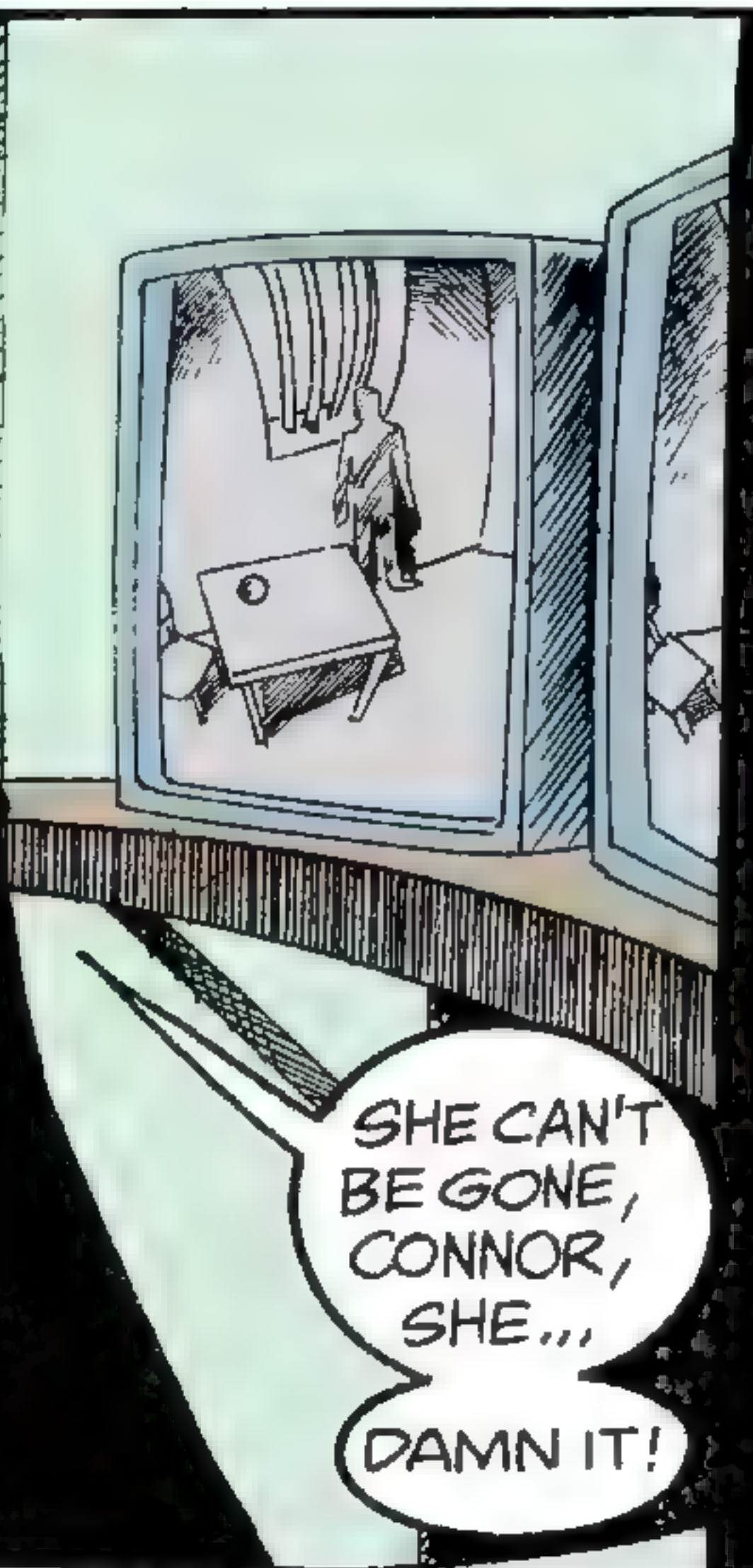


SEE? TROY GRENZER'S STILL PART OF YOU. SO ARE ALL HIS VICTIMS.

MY GOD...



SIR!
SHE'S
GONE!



SHE CAN'T
BE GONE,
CONNOR,
SHE...
DAMN IT!



SHADE?!

HER VOICE, CALLING ME BACK
FROM DESPAIR. THE POWER OF
MADNESS. THE POWER OF
LOVE, SWEET BIRD OF
YOUTH...



THE
SMITHY OF
MY SOUL...

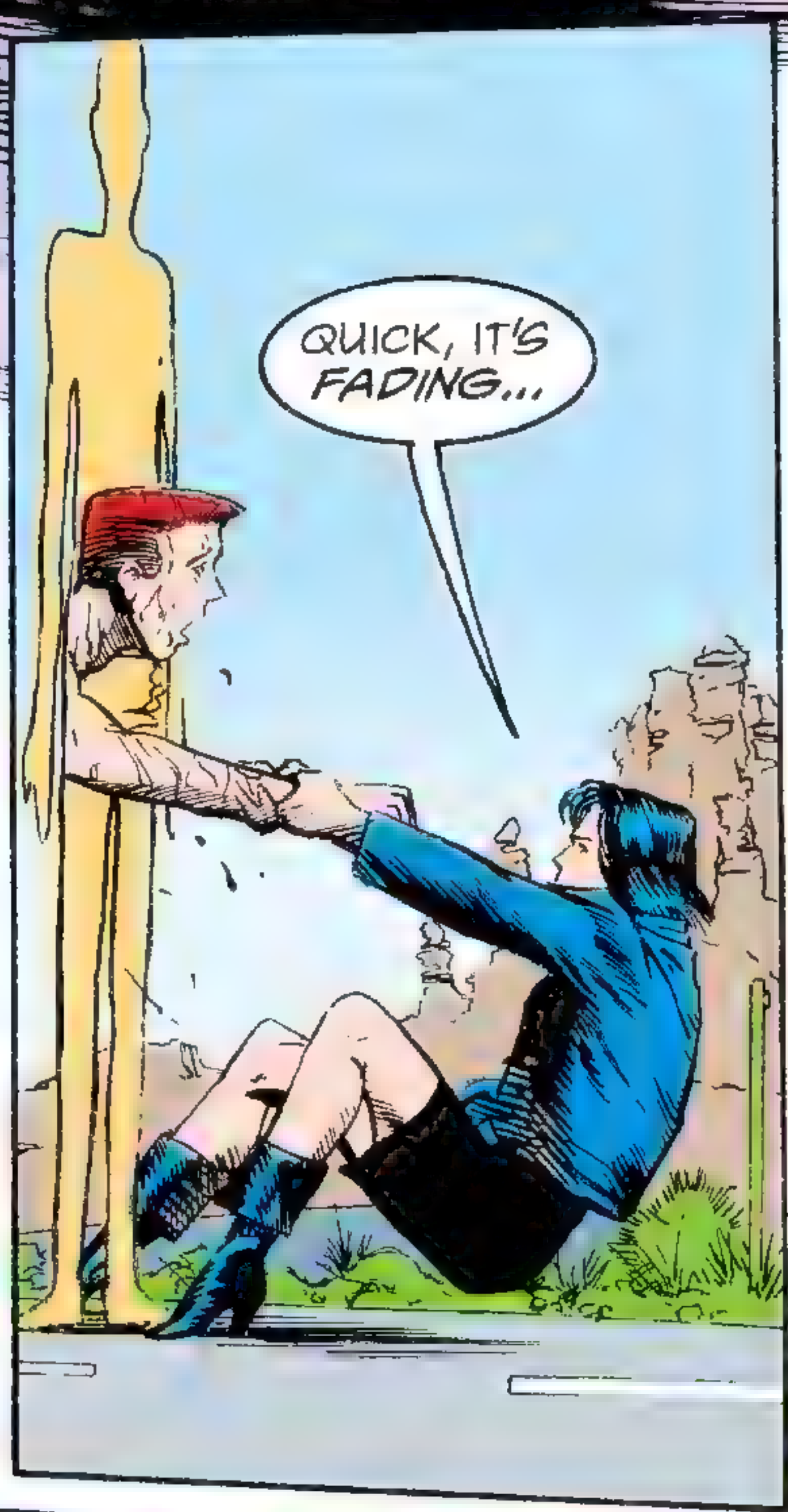




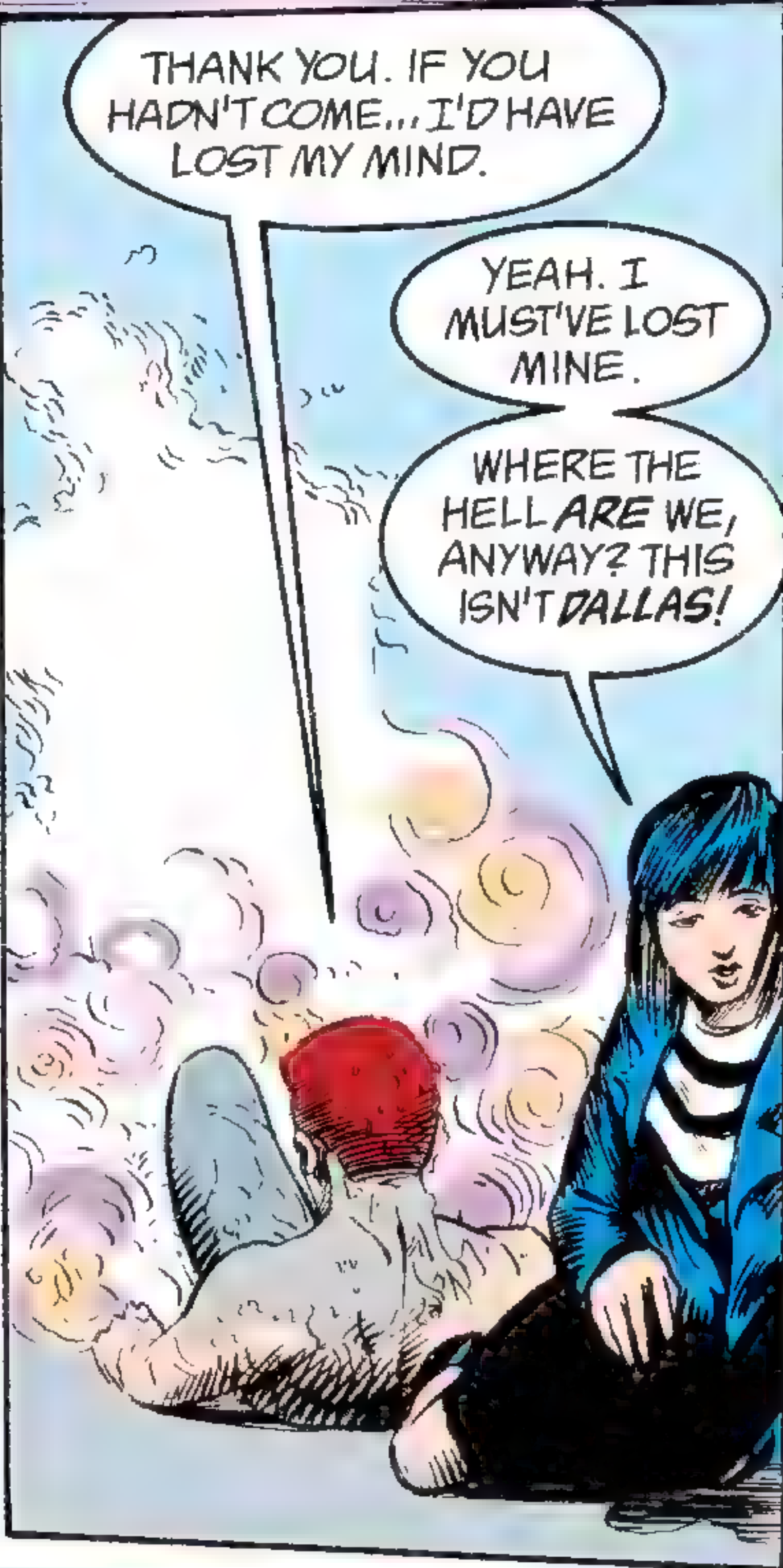
SHADE,
ARE
YOU...?

ONLY A
FEW SECONDS.
THE SCREAM WILL
BE BACK...

MY SHAPE...



QUICK, IT'S
FADING...



THANK YOU. IF YOU
HADN'T COME... I'D HAVE
LOST MY MIND.

YEAH. I
MUST'VE LOST
MINE.

WHERE THE
HELL ARE WE,
ANYWAY? THIS
ISN'T DALLAS!



TSKK.

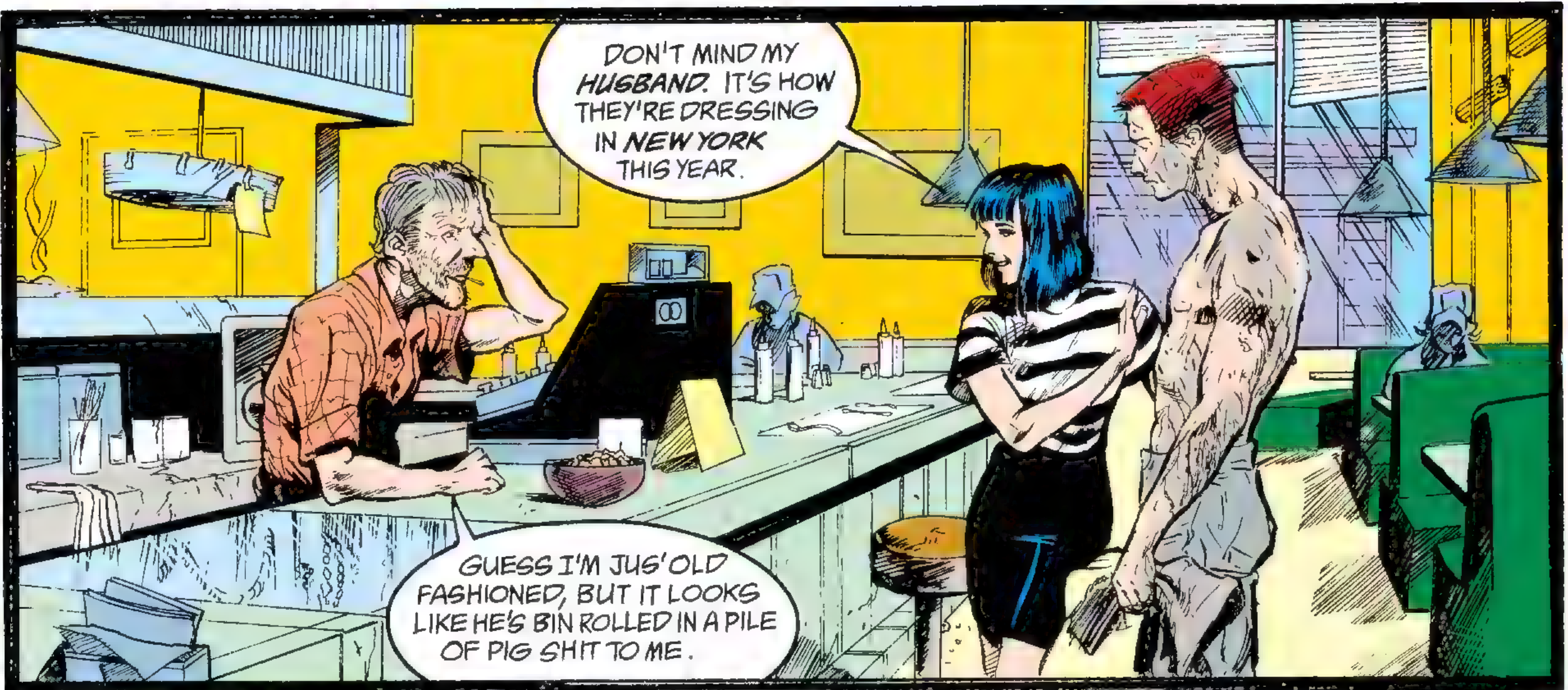


WE'RE ABOUT TWO
HUNDRED MILES WEST OF
PHOENIX. ROOM'S TWENTY
BUCKS A NIGHT, TAKE IT
OR LEAVE IT.



WANT ANY GROCERIES, JUST
HOLLER. I CAN GIT YOU LIQUOR
TOO, ON THE QUIET.

YOU *SURE*
YOU'RE OKAY,
MISTER?



DON'T MIND MY HUSBAND. IT'S HOW THEY'RE DRESSING IN NEW YORK THIS YEAR.

GUESS I'M JUS' OLD FASHIONED, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S BIN ROLLED IN A PILE OF PIG SHIT TO ME.

AS WE ENTER THE ROOM WE BOTH LOOK AT THE ONE DOUBLE BED STARING RUDELY BACK AT US...



WE SAY NOTHING. TOO TIRED. SHE FALLS ONTO THE BED, I DISINTEGRATE INTO A CHAIR, DRY MUD CLINGING TO ME LIKE OLD HABITS.



INSTANTLY MY HEAD SPINS WARMLY INTO SLEEP, MY MIND A RAW GRAZE.

I'M IN A MOTEL ROOM WITH KATHY, I CAN HEAR HER HEAVY SLEEP.



AND I SMILE, AS A MAN MIGHT SMILE LOOKING ROUND THE RUINS OF HIS HOUSE...

...AND FINDING SOMETHING HE THOUGHT HE'D LOST LONG, LONG AGO...

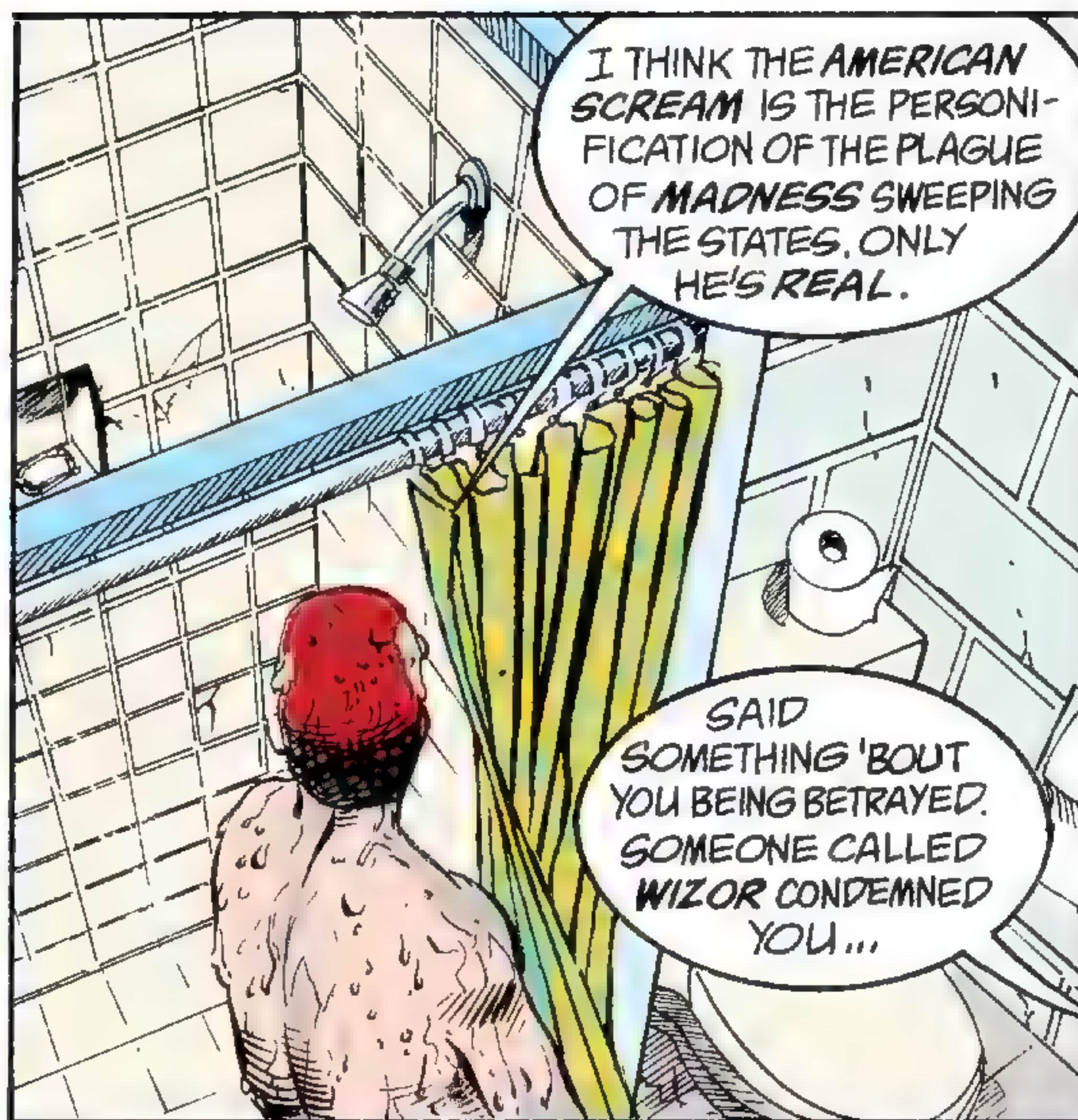




JEEZ, MY LIGHTS WENT OUT SOON AS I SMELLED THOSE SHEETS.

WHO WAS THAT AMERICAN SCREAM CREEP, ANYWAY...?

IN YOUR MIDDLE AGES THE GRIM REAPER WAS A PERSONIFICATION OF DEATH AND THE GREAT PLAGUE...

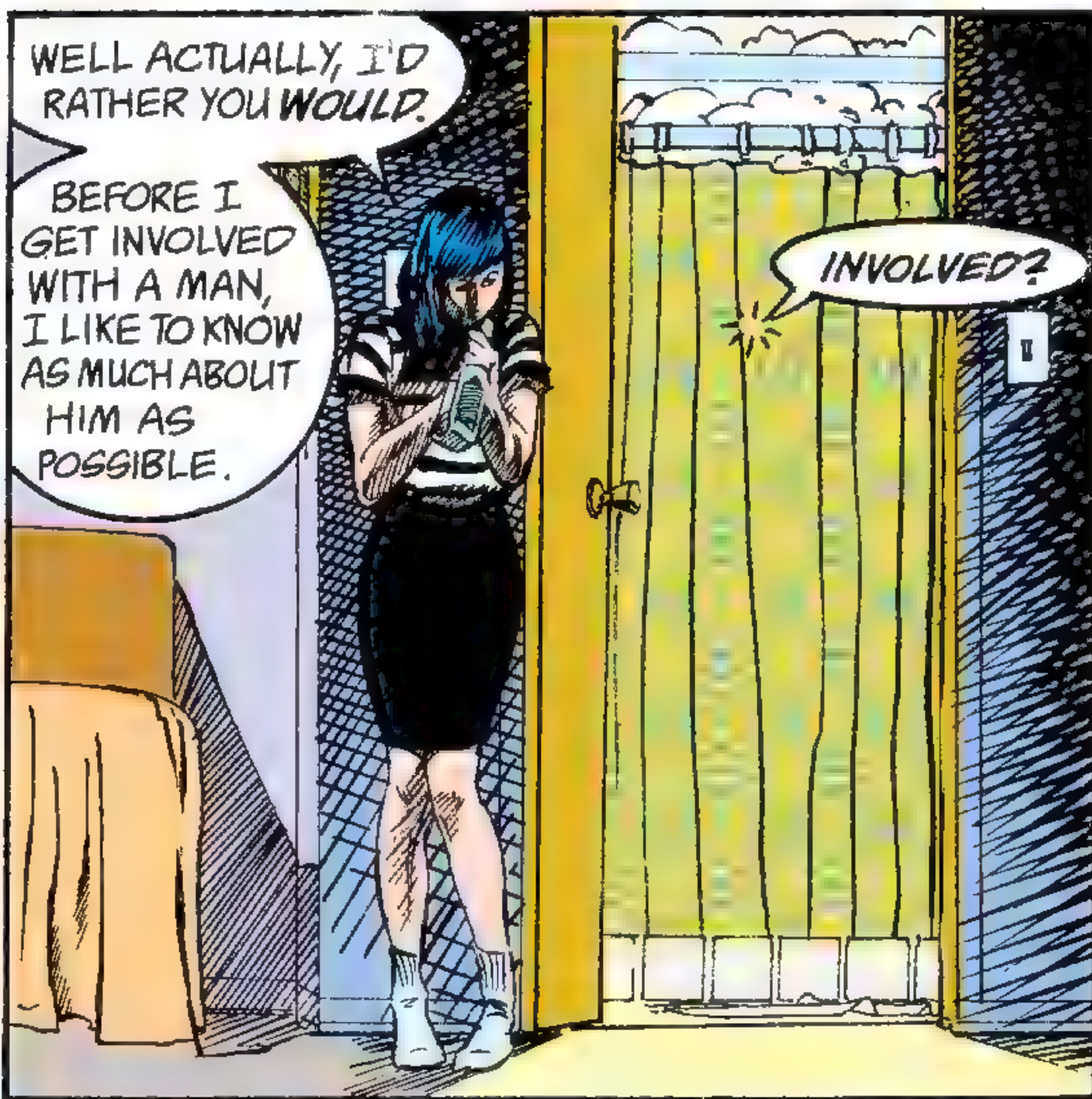


I THINK THE AMERICAN SCREAM IS THE PERSONIFICATION OF THE PLAGUE OF MADNESS SWEEPING THE STATES. ONLY HE'S REAL.

SAID SOMETHING 'BOUT YOU BEING BETRAYED. SOMEONE CALLED WIZOR CONDEMNED YOU...



YES. ACTUALLY, I'D RATHER NOT TALK ABOUT THAT, JUST YET.



WELL ACTUALLY, I'D RATHER YOU WOULD.

BEFORE I GET INVOLVED WITH A MAN, I LIKE TO KNOW AS MUCH ABOUT HIM AS POSSIBLE.

INVOLVED?



SHIT, THAT'S WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN, ISN'T IT? IT SHOULDN'T. IT'S CRAZY. BUT I ALWAYS KNOW. I'VE A KINDA INTERNAL ALARM. IT'S RINGING LIKE MAD NOW.

MY MOTHER ALWAYS SAID I WAS CRAZY.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOTHER LIKE? LIKE YOU? AS BEAUTIFUL?



JESUS, WHO ARE YOU KIDDING?

PEOPLE SAID WE WERE ALIKE. SHE WAS KINDA STUBBORN. A BIT OF A WILD STREAK, I GUESS.



I'M SORRY, STILL CAN'T TALK ABOUT HER WITHOUT BREAKING UP...

YOU'RE CHANGING THE SUBJECT, ANYHOW. WHY WERE YOU BETRAYED?



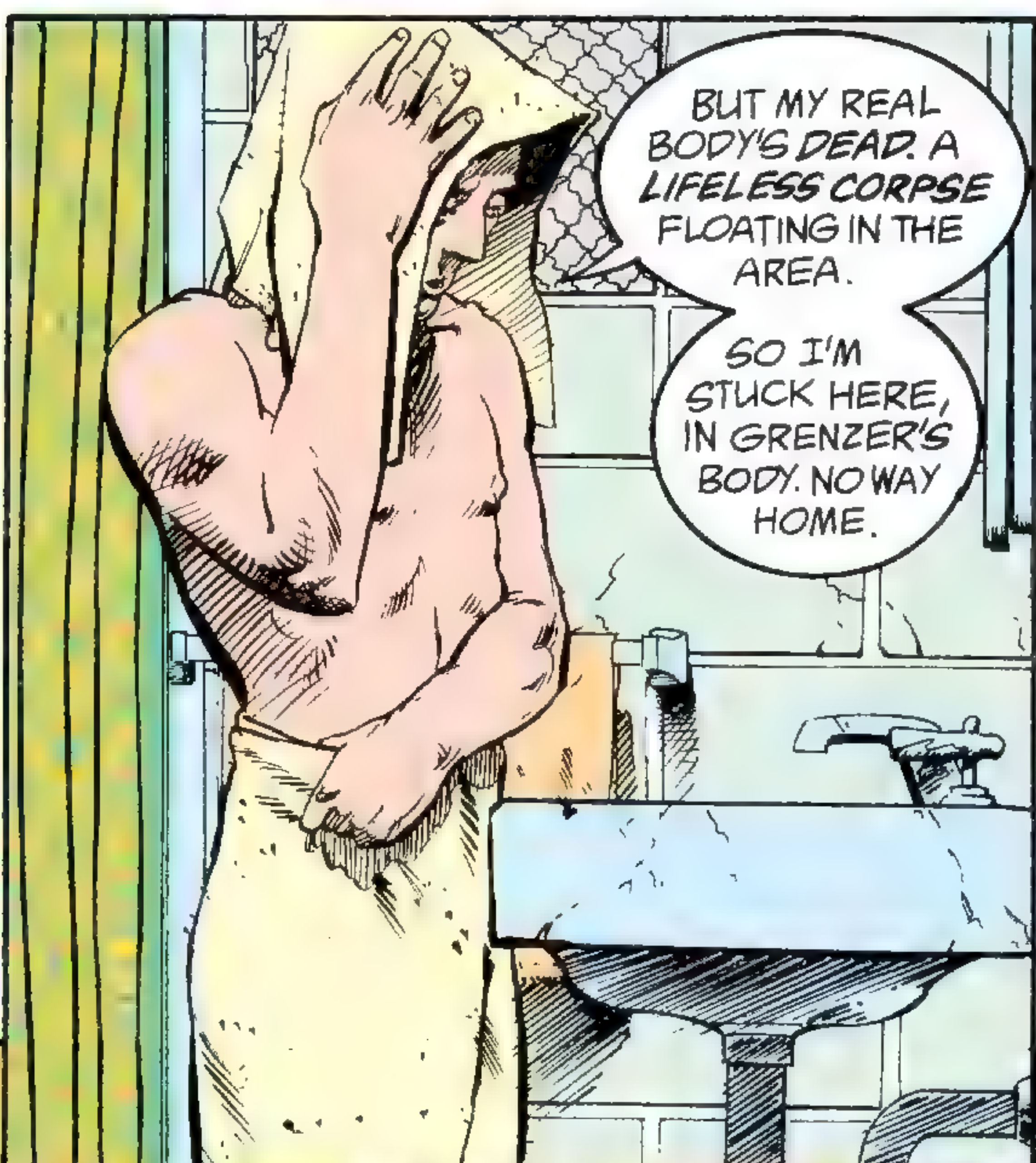
WHEN I WAS GIVEN THE MADNESS VEST IT BECAME PART OF MY *SOUL* OR *LIFEFORCE* OR WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL IT...

I THINK IT AUTOMATICALLY TRANSPORTED ME INTO THE AREA OF MADNESS.



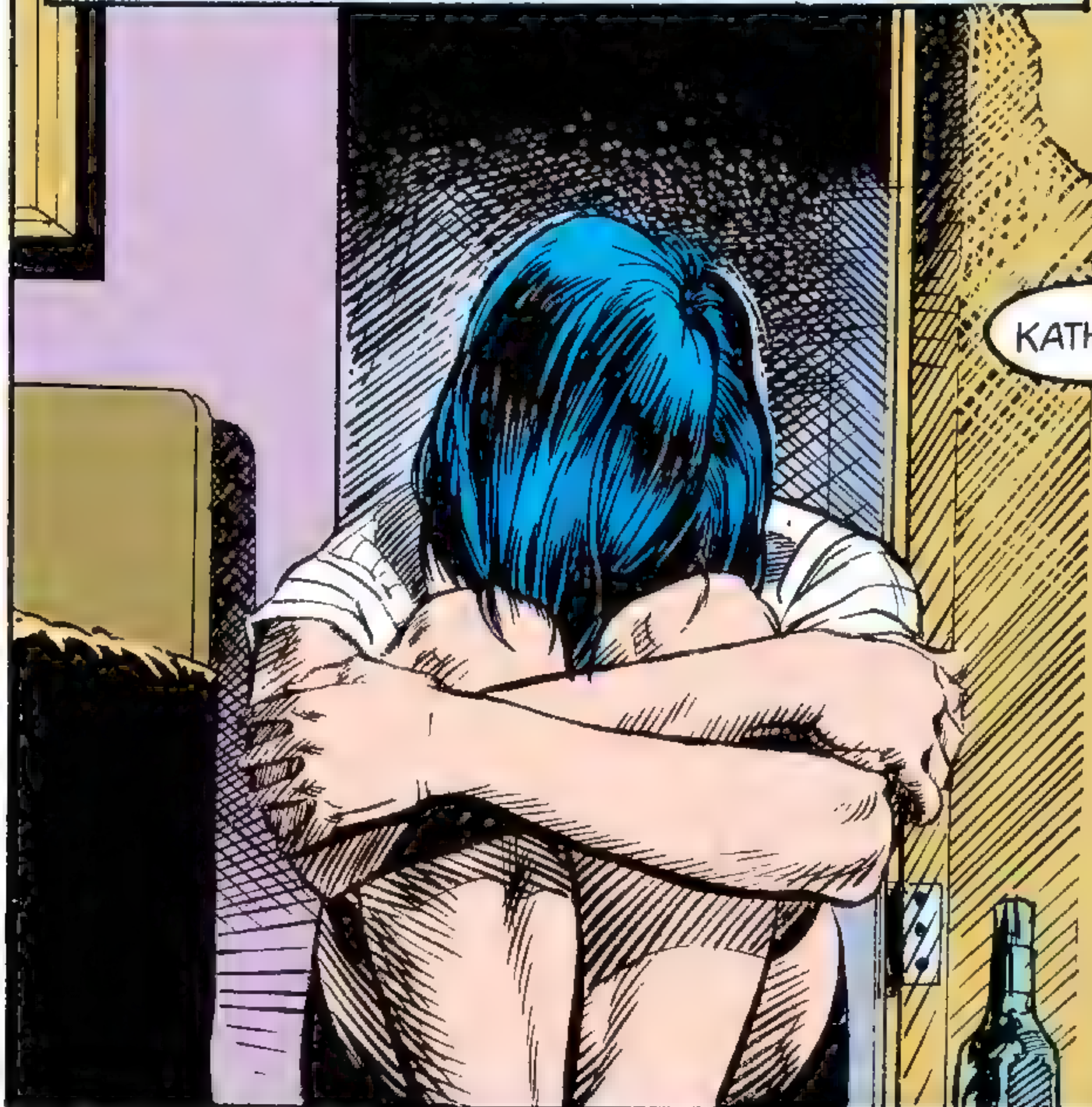
MY MASTERS TOLD ME I HAD TO LEAVE MY BODY THERE AND TAKE OVER A *HUMAN BODY*. THE POWER OF THE VEST WOULD STAY WITH MY *LIFEFORCE*.

IT WAS ONLY GOING TO BE FOR THREE MONTHS, THEN I WAS GOING TO RETURN TO MY REAL BODY, GO HOME...

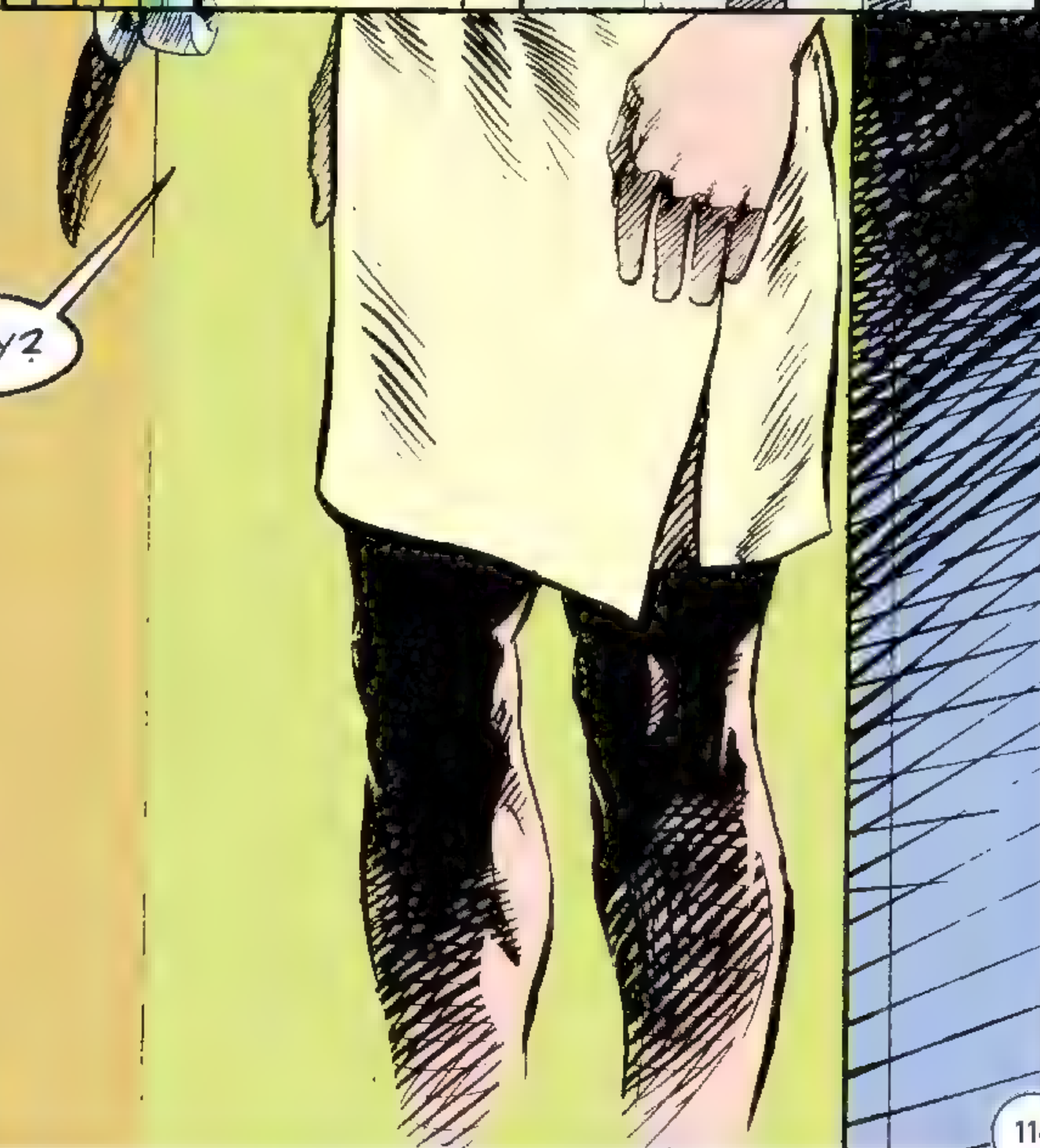


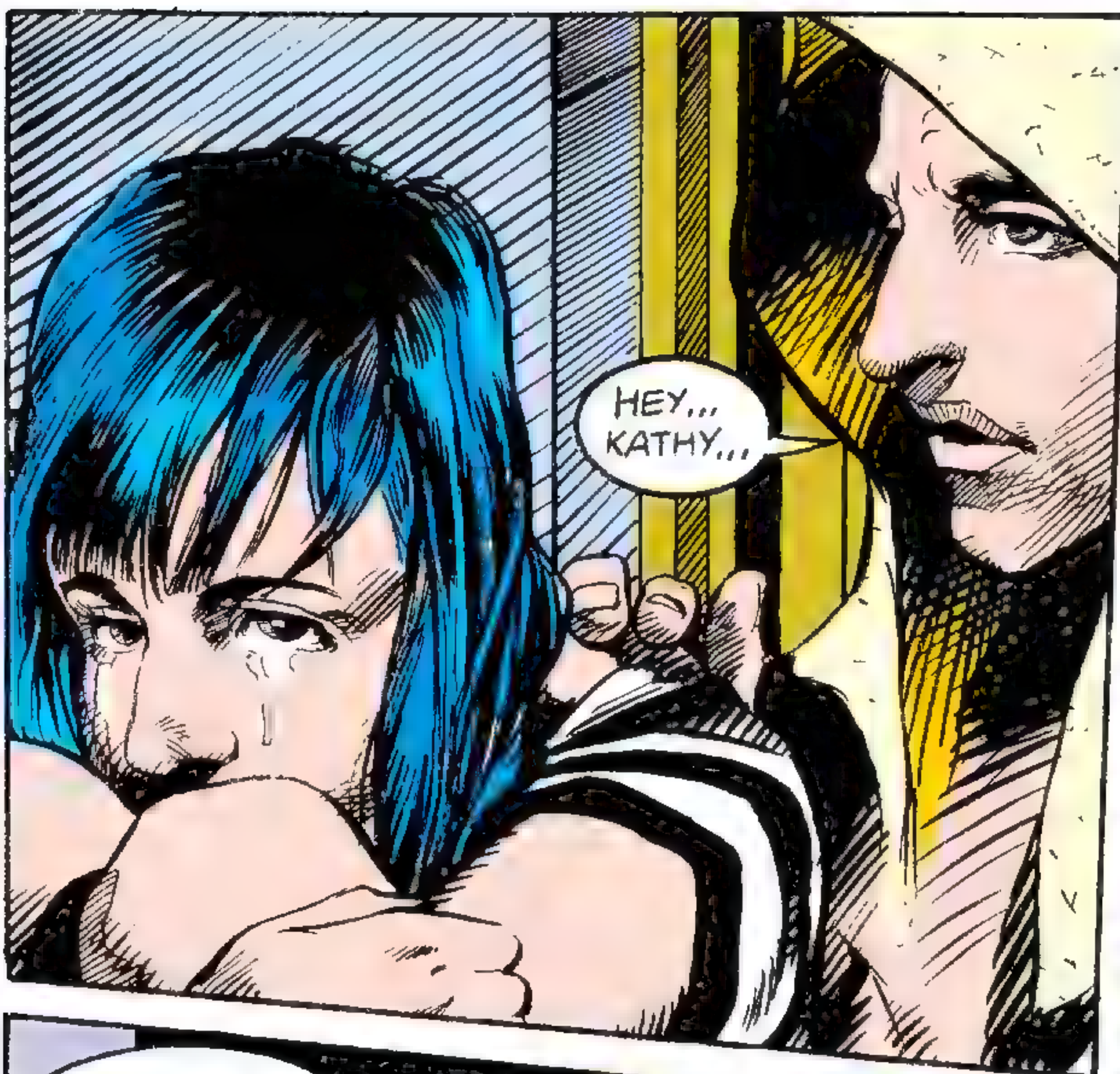
BUT MY REAL BODY'S DEAD. A *LIFELESS CORPSE* FLOATING IN THE AREA.

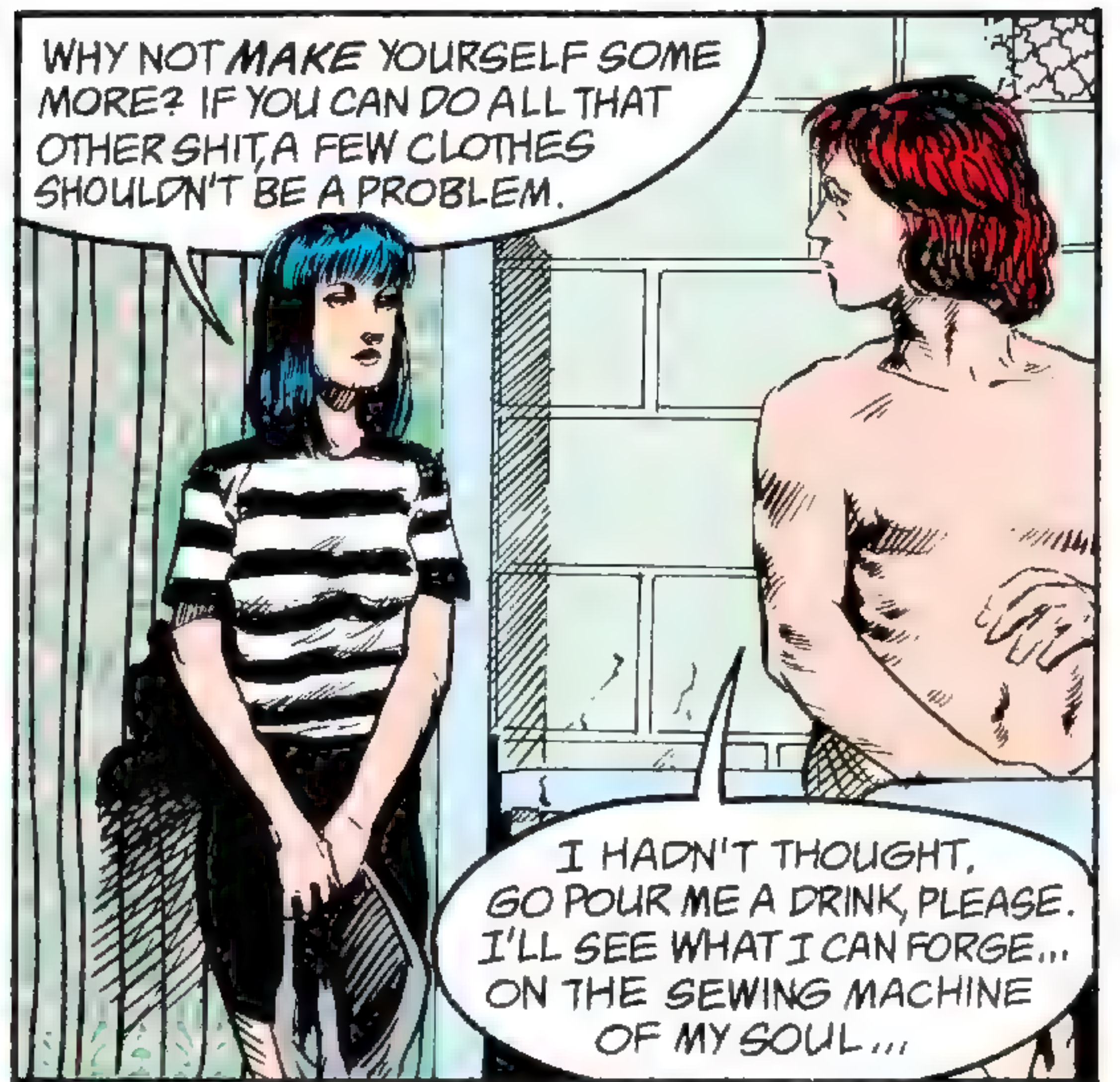
SO I'M STUCK HERE, IN GRENZER'S BODY. NO WAY HOME.

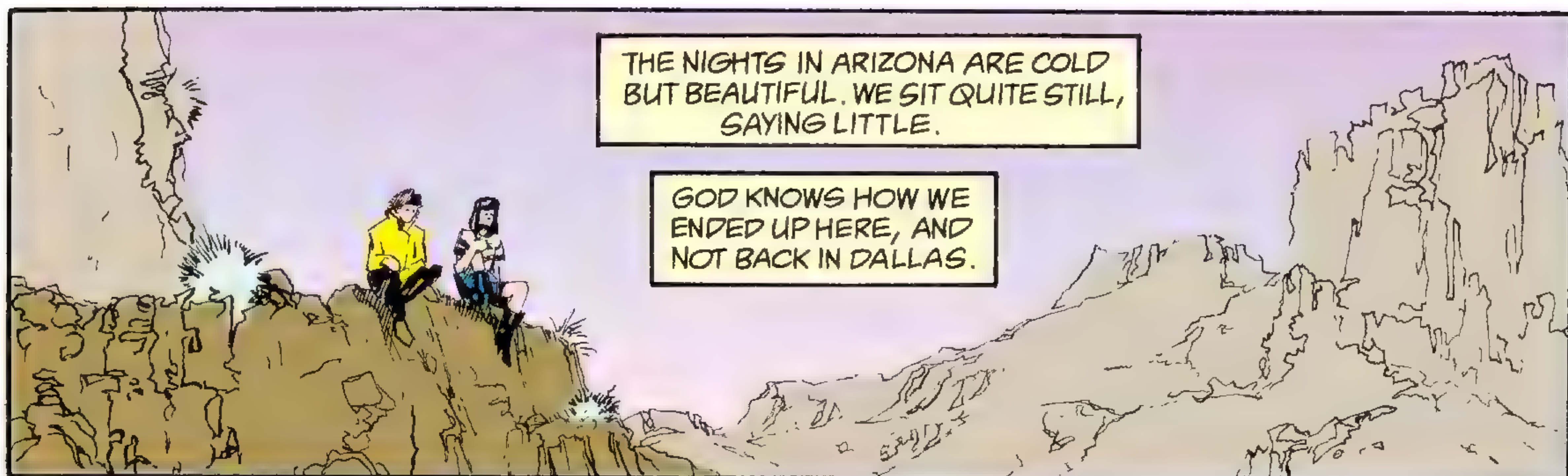


KATHY?









THE NIGHTS IN ARIZONA ARE COLD BUT BEAUTIFUL. WE SIT QUITE STILL, SAYING LITTLE.

GOD KNOWS HOW WE ENDED UP HERE, AND NOT BACK IN DALLAS.

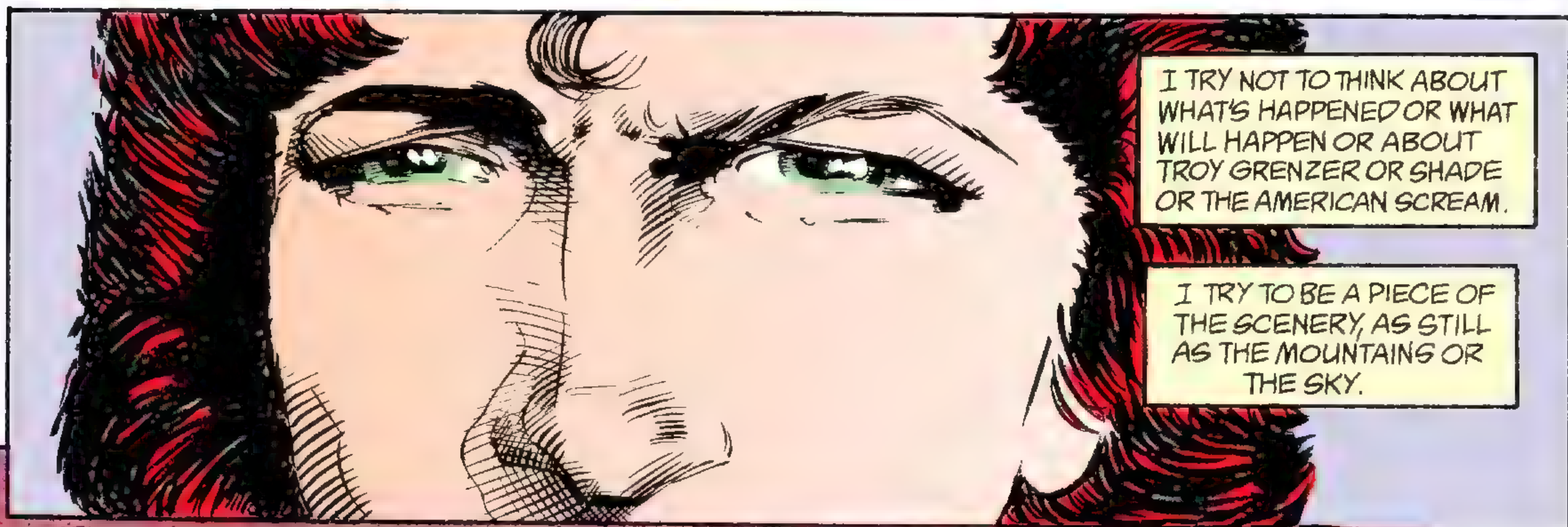


I'VE TOLD HER ALL I CAN TELL HER. SHE THINKS I'M HOLDING STUFF BACK. I'M NOT. I JUST DON'T KNOW THAT MUCH.



WE STEAL OCCASIONAL LOOKS AT EACH OTHER, FLASH QUICK SMILES, BOTH EMBARRASSED NOW. WE CAME TOO CLOSE, WE SPOKE TOO OPENLY.

WE HAVE TO PULL BACK, LET THINGS TAKE THEIR OWN TIME.



I TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENED OR WHAT WILL HAPPEN OR ABOUT TROY GRENZER OR SHADE OR THE AMERICAN SCREAM.

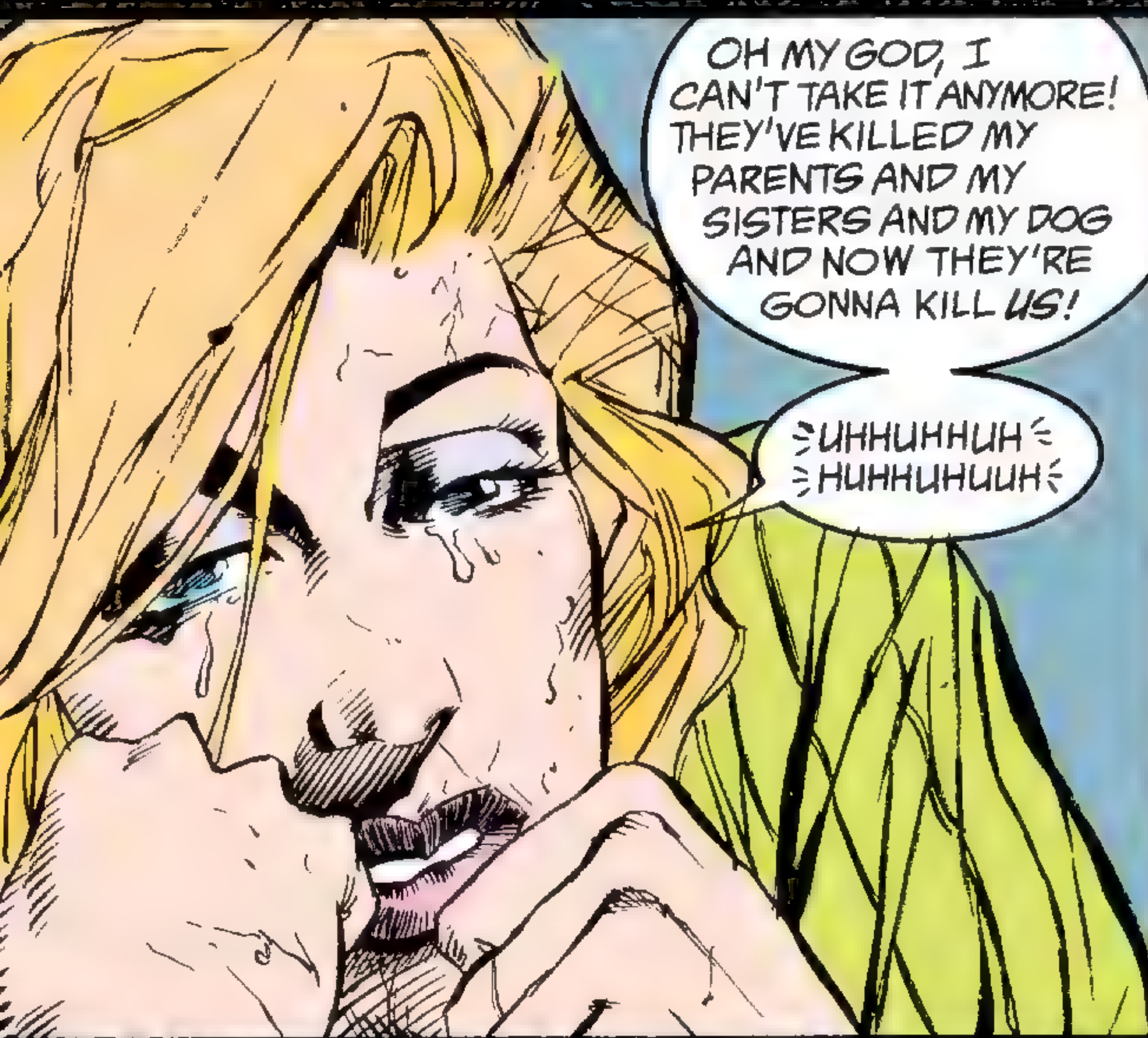
I TRY TO BE A PIECE OF THE SCENERY, AS STILL AS THE MOUNTAINS OR THE SKY.

I LOOK AT THE DYING SUN, BLEEDING OVER THE ROUGH HORIZON, REMEMBERING SUNSETS ON META, WHEN I WAS YOUNG...

IT ALMOST MAKES ME WANT TO CRY.

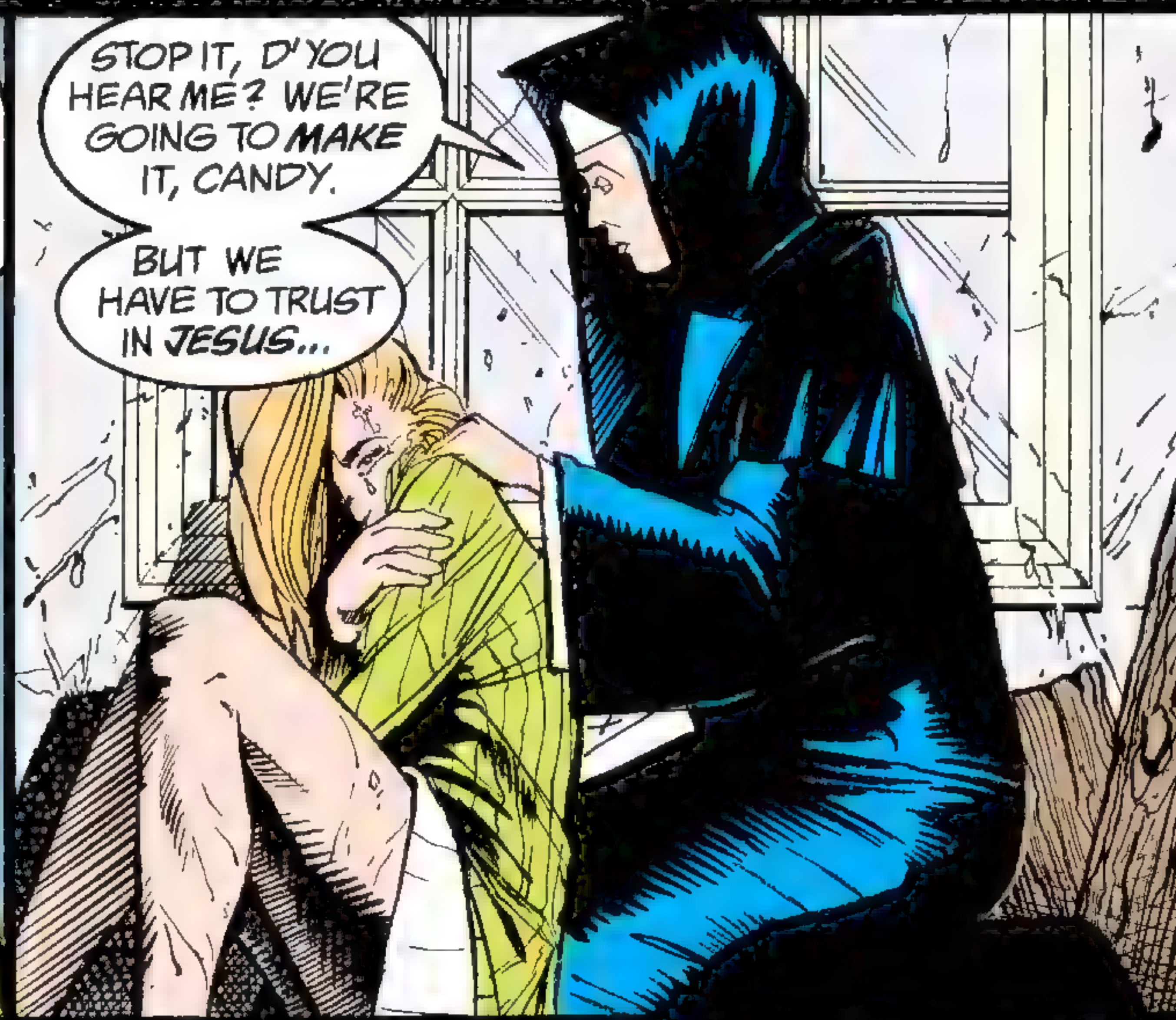
END





OH MY GOD, I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE! THEY'VE KILLED MY PARENTS AND MY SISTERS AND MY DOG AND NOW THEY'RE GONNA KILL US!

≡UHUUUUUH≡
≡HUUUUUUUH≡



STOP IT, D'YOU HEAR ME? WE'RE GOING TO MAKE IT, CANDY.

BUT WE HAVE TO TRUST IN JESUS...



YOU TRUST IN JESUS, SISTER. I'LL TRUST IN MY KALENSHKEKOV.

TROUBLE IS I'VE ONLY GOT THREE ROUNDS LEFT, SO IF WE AIN'T OUTTA BEVERLY HILLS BY NIGHT-FALL, WE'RE DEAD.



WELL, I, I... I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD GO ANYPLACE 'TIL CANDY'S FIT. SHE'S HURT REAL BAD, SON...

THAT'S TOO BAD. THIS IS WAR. NO PASSENGERS.



DAMN YOU, RICK. DON'T YOU SEE IT'S THAT KIND OF HATE THEY FEED ON? THE MONSTERS AREN'T OUT THERE, THEY'RE WITHIN US...

ONLY LOVE CAN SEE US THROUGH...



NNARGGGGK!



HOLY... IT LOOKS LIKE,
LIKE... CHARLIE CHAPLIN...!

GIT DOWN,
SISTER, I CAN'T
SHOOT IT 'LESS
YOU GIT DOWN!



YOU COULD'VE KILLED ME,
BUT YOU DIDN'T CARE SO LONG
AS YOU POTTED THAT...THING!

SO WHAT'S IT TO
YOU WHETHER YOU DIE
OR NOT? YOU'RE GOING
TO HEAVEN, AIN'T YOU,
SISTER?



WHY NOT
ADMIT YOU'RE A
WOMAN, WITH A WOMAN'S
NEEDS? I SEEN HOW
YOU LOOK AT ME...

TH-TH-THEY'RE...
THEY'RE COMING...



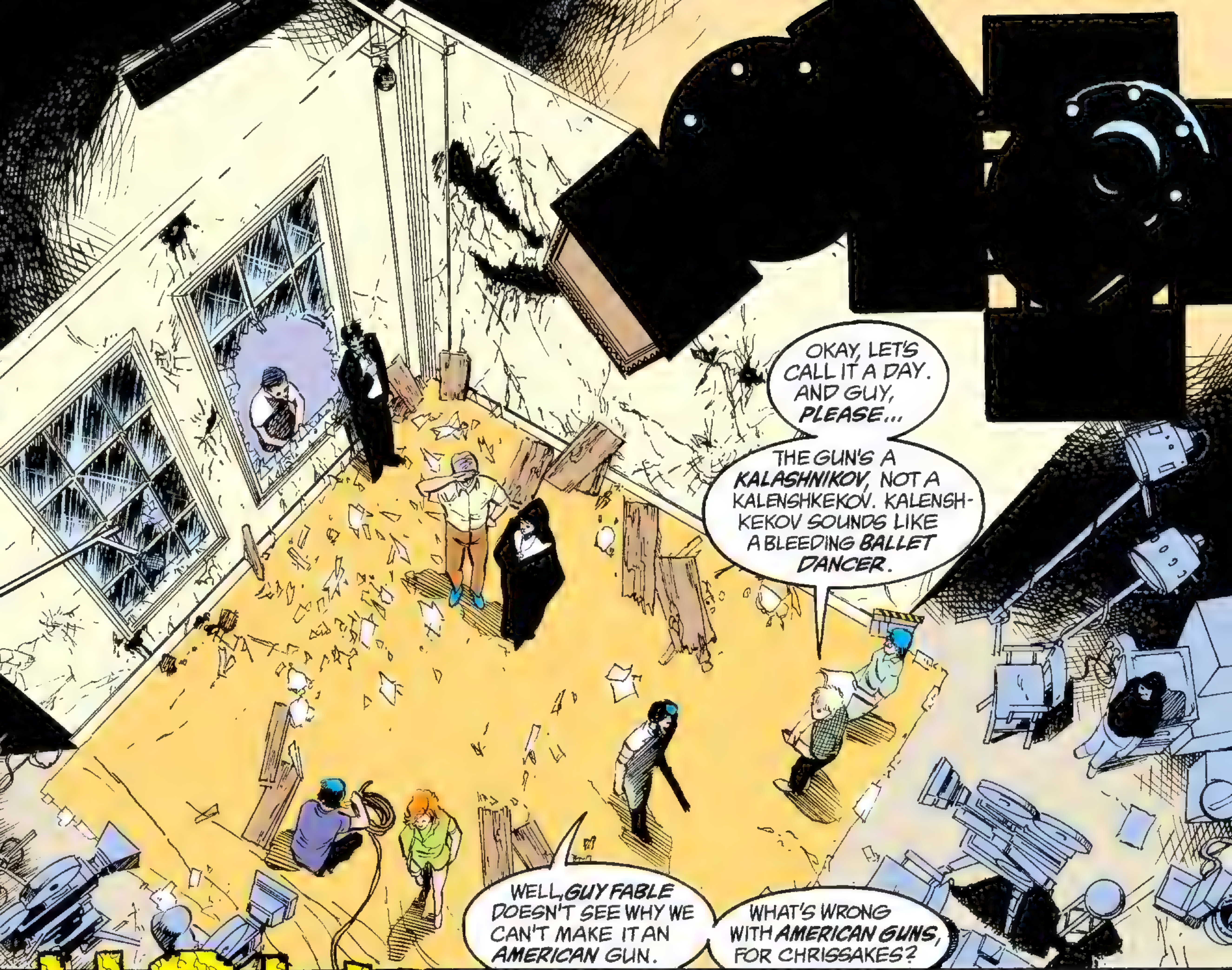
WELL, I'LL BE DARNED
GOTTA BE THREE HUNDRED
HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS
OUT THERE.

THERE'S CAGNEY,
GABLE, BOGART...

WE MUST BE THE LAST
NORMAL PEOPLE LEFT IN
BEVERLY KILLS.

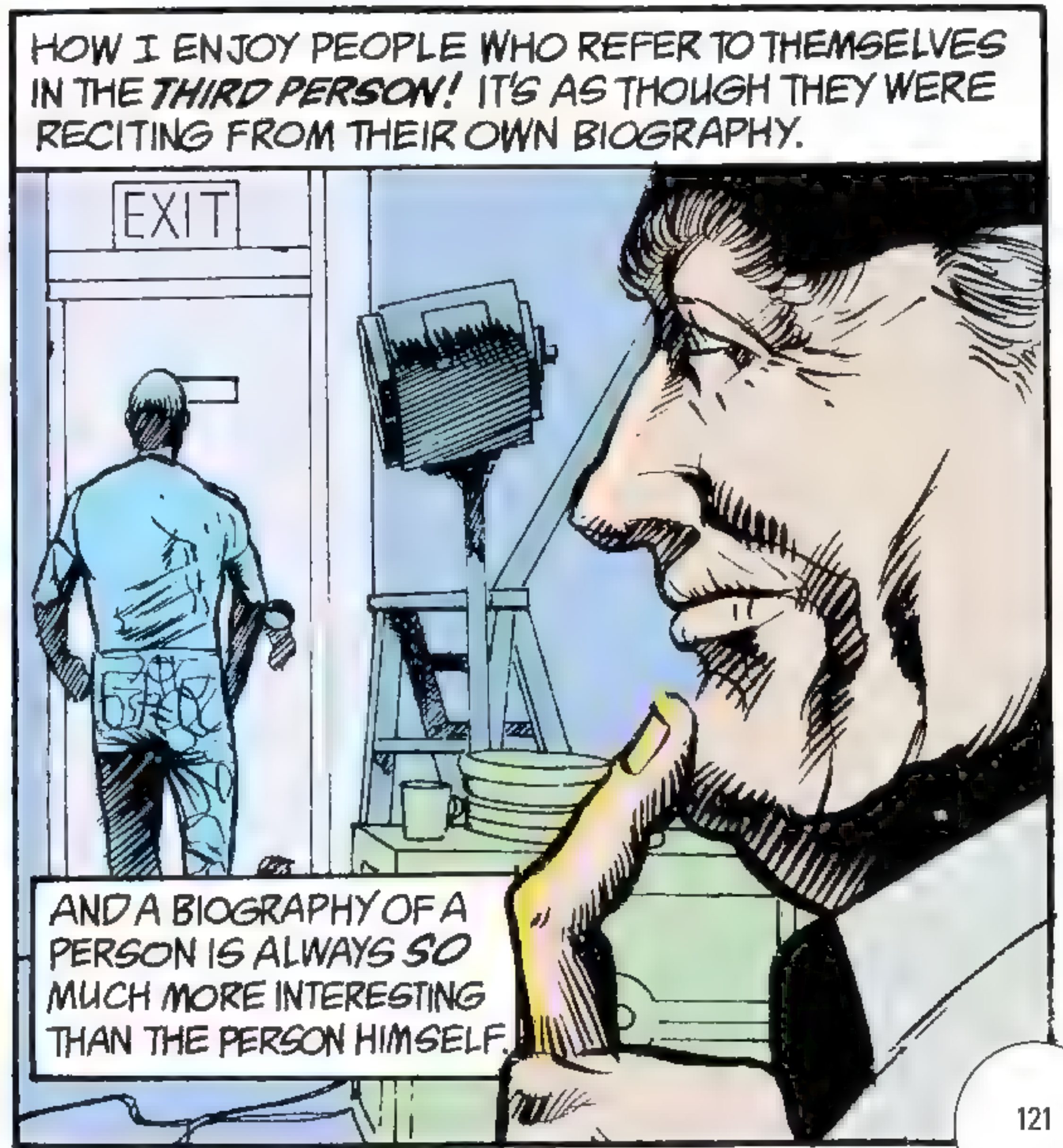
I MEAN
HILLS...

CUT!

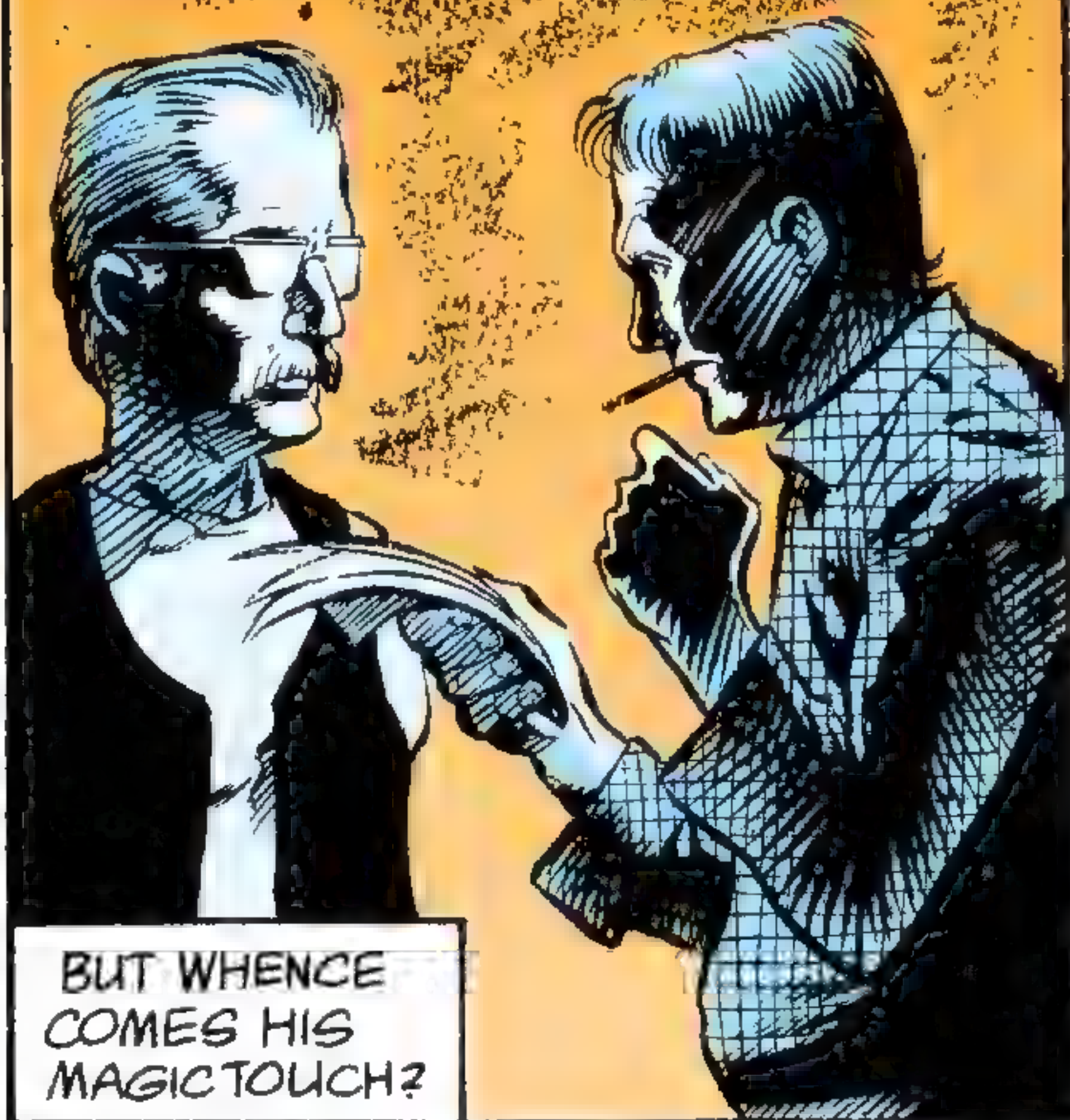


HOLLYWOOD BABBLE ON

PETER MILLIGAN: WRITER
CHRIS BACHALO: PENCILLER
MARK PENNINGTON: INKER
DANIEL VOZZO: COLORS
TODD KLEIN: LETTERS
TOM PEYER: ASST. ED.
KAREN BERGER: EDITOR
CREATED BY STEVE DITKO



I'M ON THE SET OF **HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS**, DIRECTED BY BRITISH ENFANT TERRIBLE **ED LOOT**, A MAN WHO IS TO THE CINEMA WHAT **GARLIC** IS TO **HALITOSIS**.



BUT WHENCE COMES HIS MAGIC TOUCH?

ED KNOWS THAT AMERICA IS ONLY INTERESTED IN TIGHT SKIN, LOUD MUSIC, BIG GUNS AND BIG CARS.

BUT HE ALSO KNOWS WE LIKE TO PRETEND DIFFERENT. SO HE GIVES US JUST ENOUGH ART TO MAKE US FEEL GOOD ABOUT OURSELVES.



I SEE. CHEESEBURGERS WITH A SOUPÇON OF CAVIAR.

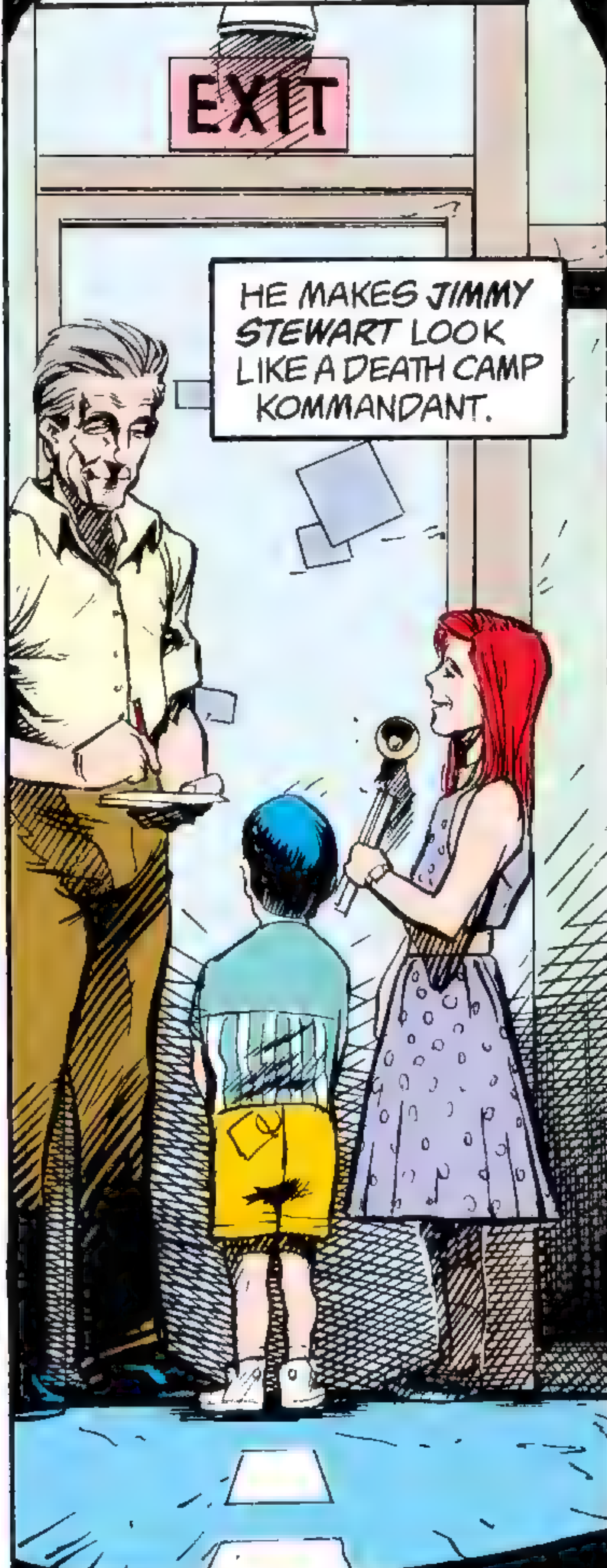
CANDICE FLOWERS IS AN ACTRESS. IF THE **QUEEN OF ENGLAND** BURNT HER BRA, TOOK TO THE STAGE, AND READ NOTHING BUT **SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR**, SHE PROBABLY STILL WOULDN'T TALK LIKE **CANDICE FLOWERS**.



THIS IS AN IMPORTANT FILM. MONSTER COMES FROM THE LATIN *MONERE*, TO WARN. ED'S WARNING US ABOUT THE MONSTERS INSIDE THE PREDOMINANTLY WHITE MALE-RUN SOCIETY...

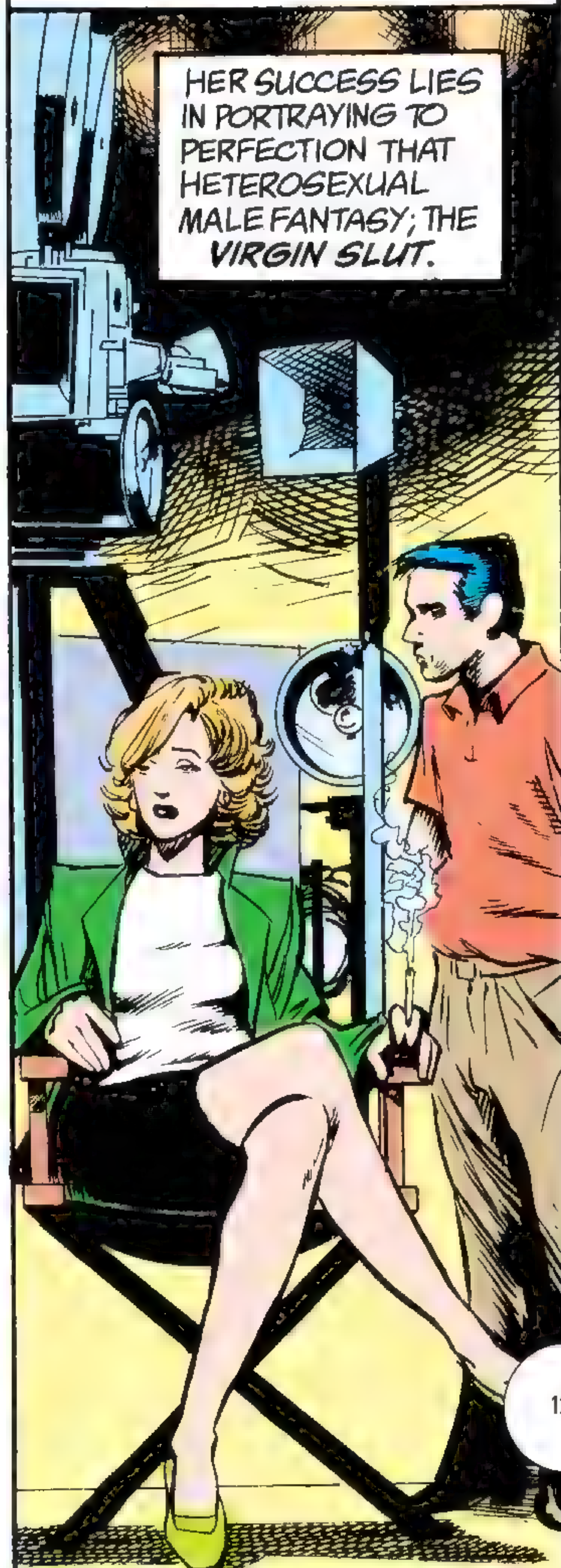
HE'S USING THE HORROR GENRE IN A VERY... A VERY **BRECHTIAN** WAY. THE **SUBTEXT** IS...

KENT HARTON HAS THE FACE OF A GOOD-NATURED SEA ANEMONE. HE TALKS ABOUT HIS WIFE AND FAMILY AND SPINS SIMPLE HOME TRUTHS.



HE MAKES **JIMMY STEWART** LOOK LIKE A DEATH CAMP KOMMANDANT.

EMERALD DARLING IS THE RISING STARLET OF HOLLYWOOD, RUMORED TO HAVE HAD **SILICONE IMPLANTS** IN HER LIPS TO IMPROVE HER POUT.



HER SUCCESS LIES IN PORTRAYING TO PERFECTION THAT HETEROSEXUAL MALE FANTASY; THE **VIRGIN SLUT**.



HE'S SUCH A WANKER! GUY FABLE SAYS THIS, GUY FABLE SAYS THAT. IS HE NUTS OR WHAT?

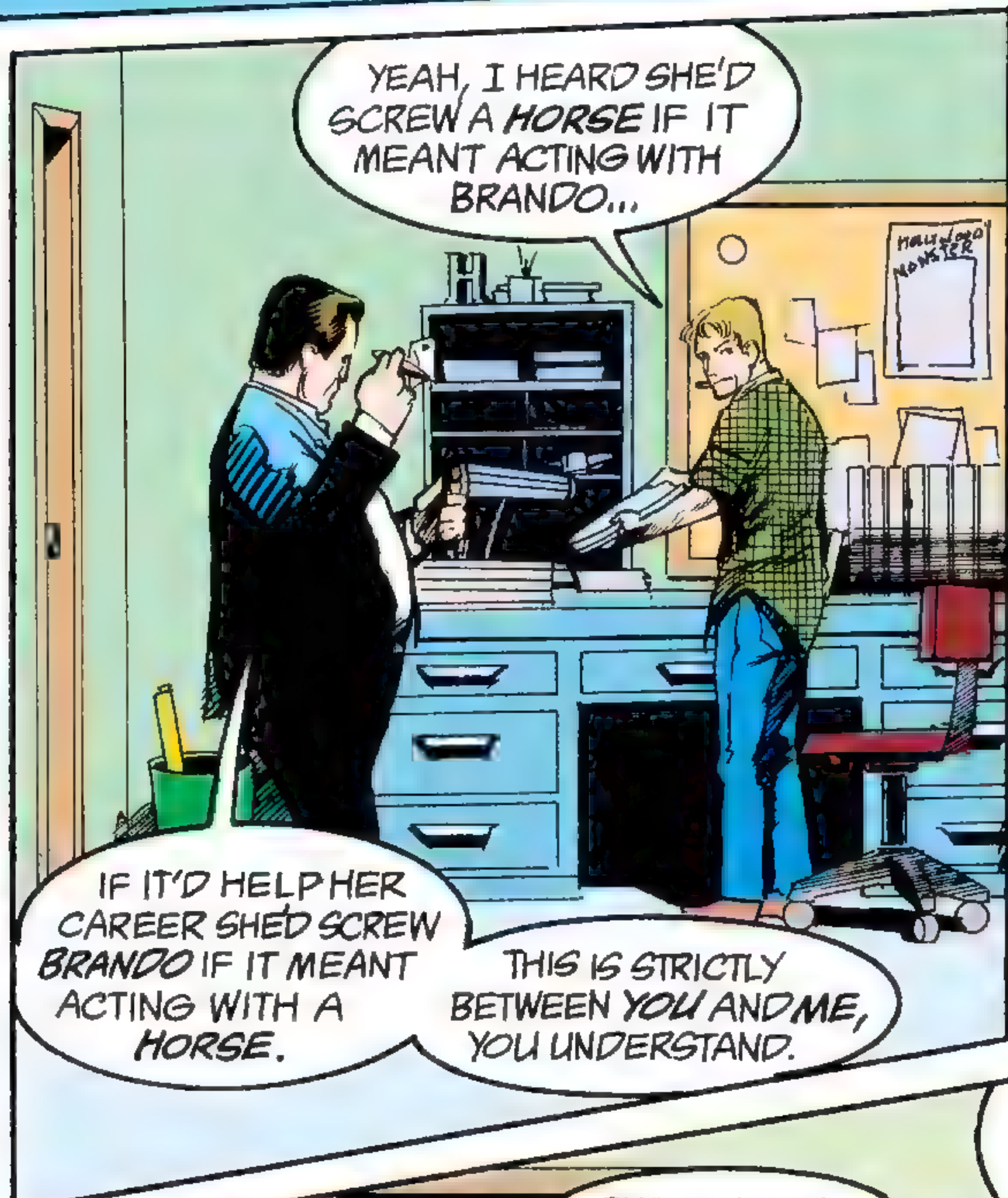
IT'S JUST HIS WAY. HE MIGHT BE THE BIGGEST AND MADDEST BASTARD IN HOLLYWOOD, BUT THE PEOPLE LOVE HIM.

THEY BETTER STAY LOVING HIM. IF "MONSTERS" TURKEYS, IT COULD BE ANOTHER "HEAVEN'S GATE."

AND BRING DOWN THE STUDIO? THAT'D BE A GIGGLE, WOULDN'T IT?

'ERE, I WANT A SPEECH COACH FOR EMERALD. HOW THE HELL DID I GET LUMBERED WITH HER ANYWAY?

AW, STRICTLY BETWEEN YOU AND ME, EDWARD, SHE WAS...NICE TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE. SHE'S AMBITIOUS AS HELL, YOU KNOW.



YEAH, I HEARD SHE'D SCREW A HORSE IF IT MEANT ACTING WITH BRANDO...

IF IT'D HELP HER CAREER SHE'D SCREW BRANDO IF IT MEANT ACTING WITH A HORSE.

THIS IS STRICTLY BETWEEN YOU AND ME, YOU UNDERSTAND.



SURE, WILLIAM. THESE PEOPLE SHE WAS NICE TO. YOU WOULDN'T BE AMONG THEM, BY ANY CHANCE?

I TAKE THAT AS AN INSULT, EDWARD. A FILTHY, DEFAMATORY, DISGUSTING SLUR ON MY GOOD NAME AS A HUSBAND AND FATHER...

YOU KNOW HOW I WORK. ONLY I SEE THE RUSHES ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS.



HOW WAS SHE?

PHENOMENAL.

CAN I SEE THE RUSHES WITH YOU? I AM ONE OF THE GODDAMN PRODUCERS...



YOU SEE THEM END OF THE WEEK. IF YOU DON'T LIKE WHAT YOU SEE, THAT'S THE TIME TO FIRE ME!

RIGHT TO DIE

WHAT A THOUGHT! HIM, SCREWING EMERALD DARLING! MUST LOOK LIKE A JELLY FISH MOUNTING THE VENUS DE MILO.

HAVE TO WATCH MESELF WITH WILLIAM. HE COMES ON ALL MATEY, BUT HE'S A NASTY LITTLE SHIT AT HEART.

LIKE ME.

S
N
F
F

ARRRRHHH.
BETTER. MUCH.

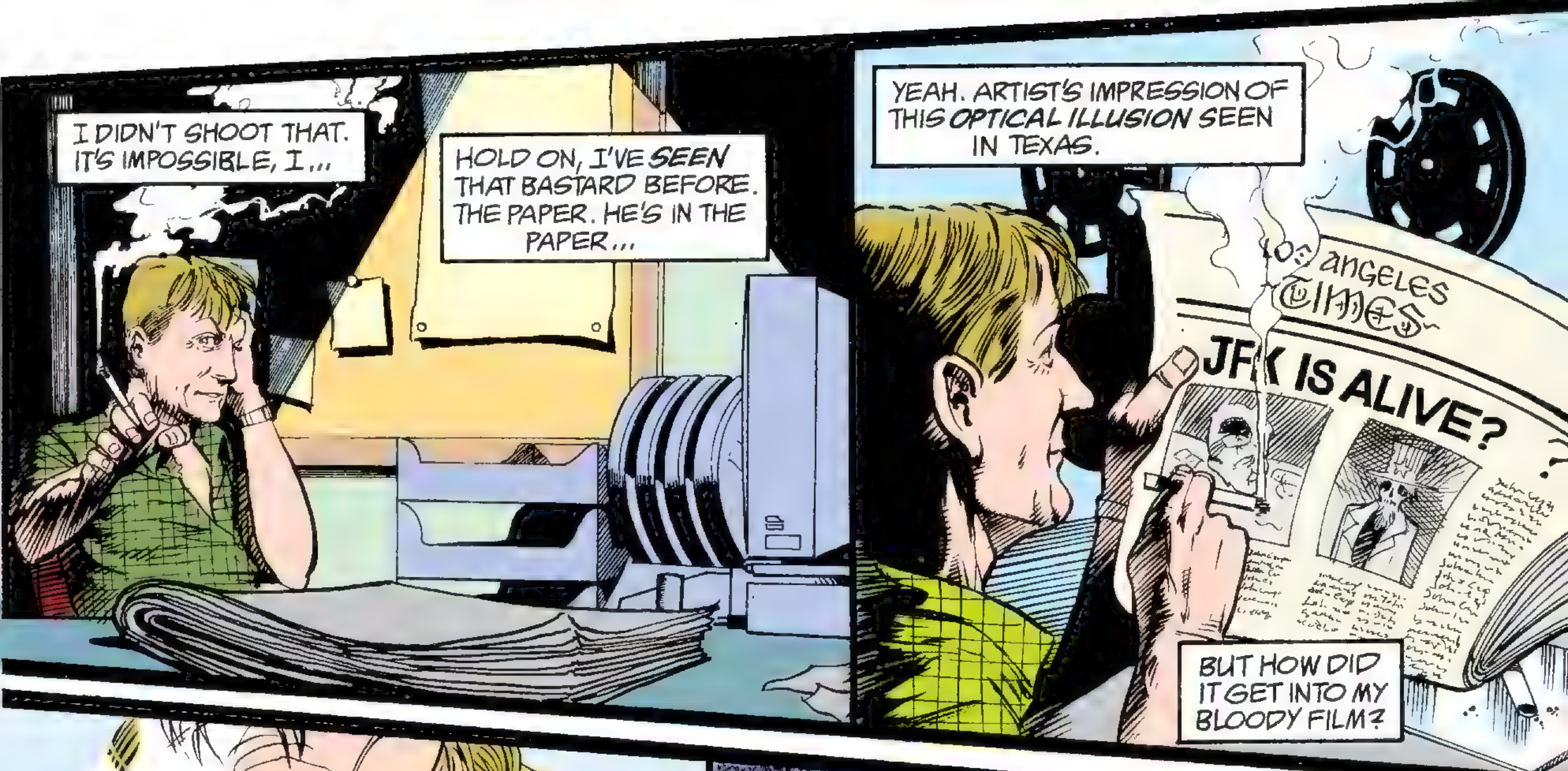
NOW LET'S
TAKE A BUTCHERS
AT WHAT ED THE
GENIUS HAS
CREATED.

OH GOD, MISTER ALL-AMERICAN MALE MACHO MAN KALENSHKEKOV HIMSELF.

THAT'S NICE, THOUGH.
VERY NICE.

BUGGER IT, WHY DOES EMERALD HAVE TO POUT ALL THE BLOODY TIME AND...

...WHAT IS THAT??

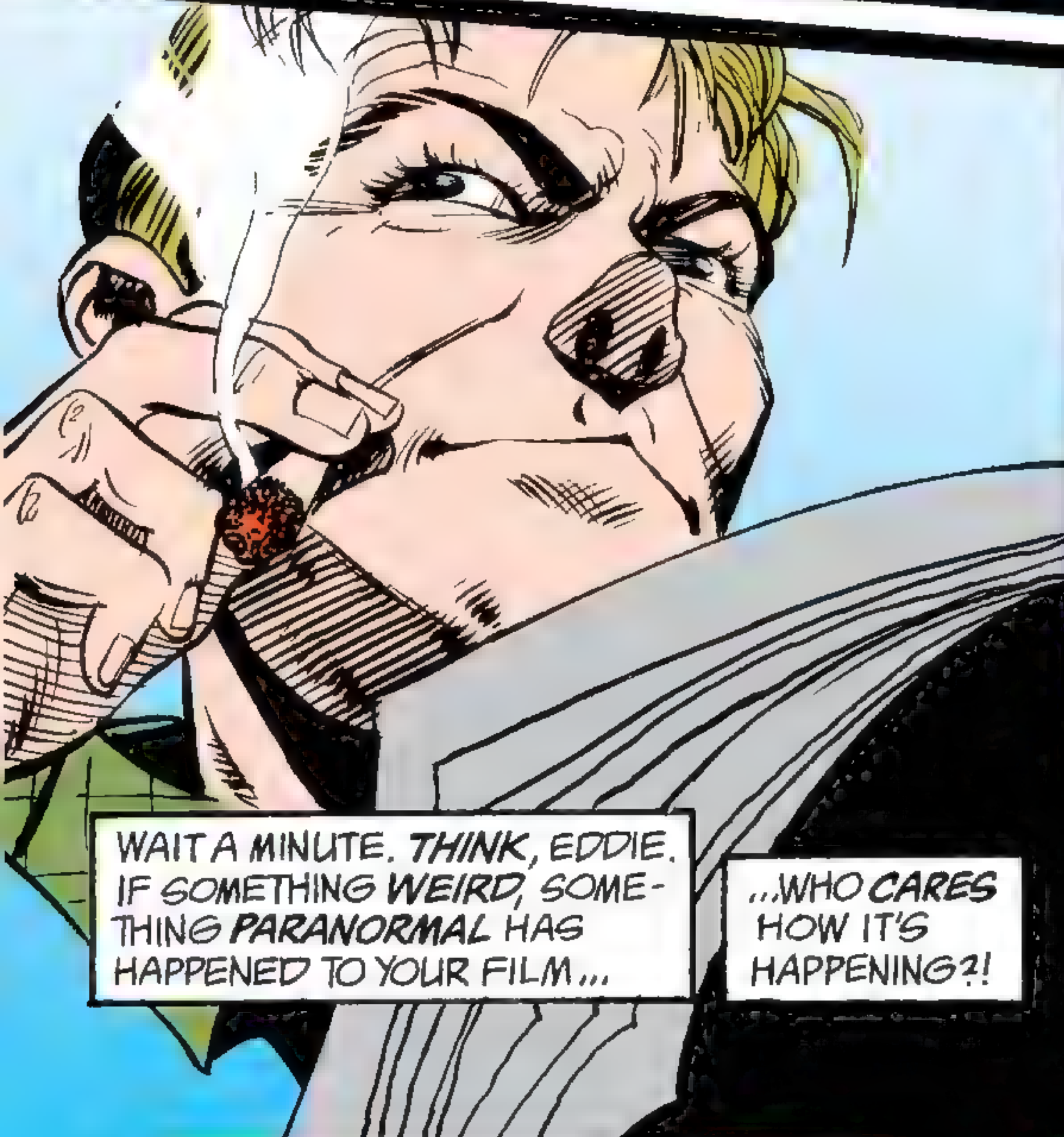


I DIDN'T SHOOT THAT.
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, I...

HOLD ON, I'VE SEEN
THAT BASTARD BEFORE.
THE PAPER. HE'S IN THE
PAPER...

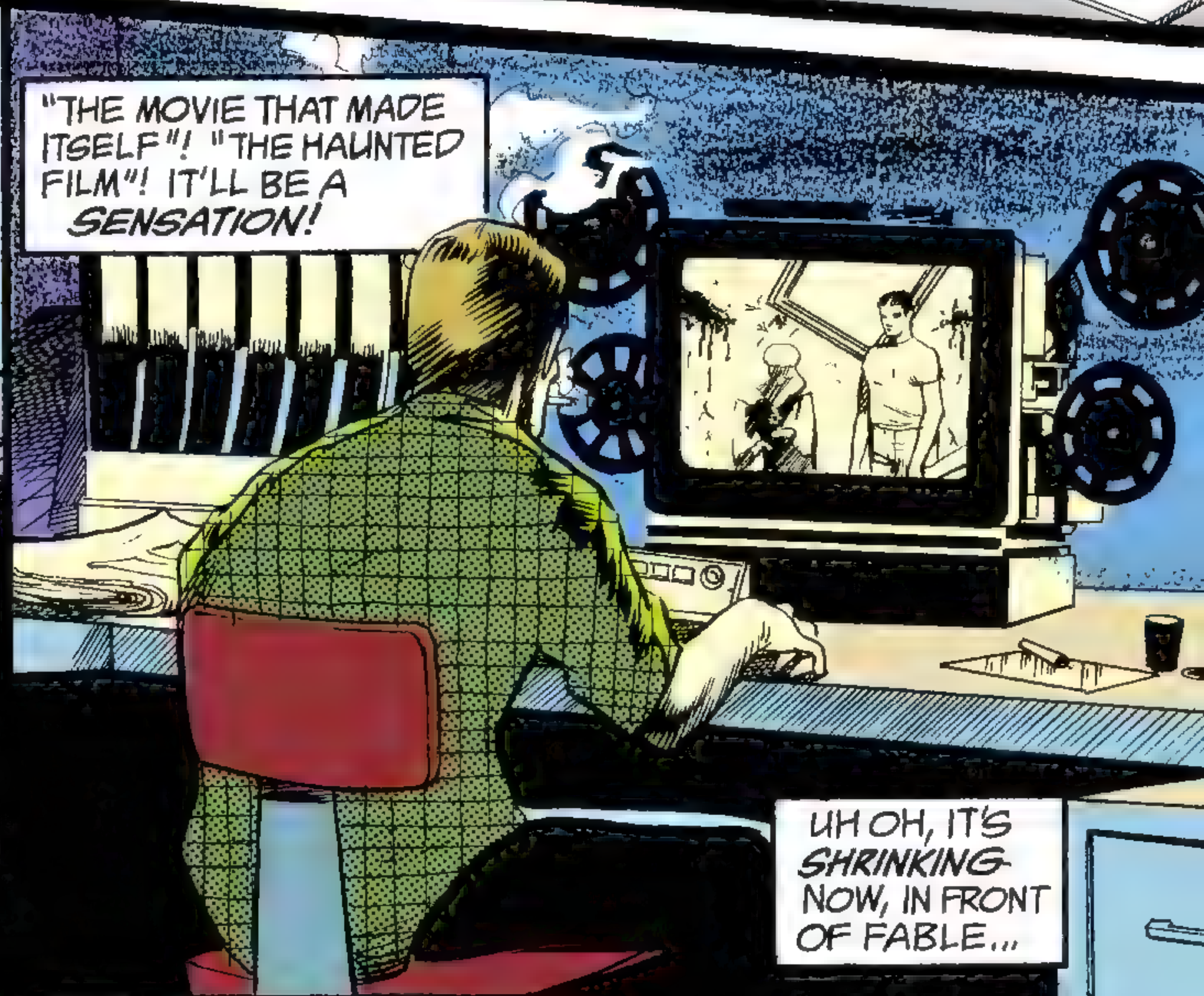
YEAH. ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF
THIS OPTICAL ILLUSION SEEN
IN TEXAS.

BUT HOW DID
IT GET INTO MY
BLOODY FILM?



WAIT A MINUTE. *THINK*, EDDIE.
IF SOMETHING *WEIRD*, SOME-
THING *PARANORMAL* HAS
HAPPENED TO YOUR FILM...

...WHO CARES
HOW IT'S
HAPPENING?!



"THE MOVIE THAT MADE
ITSELF"! "THE HAUNTED
FILM"! IT'LL BE A
SENSATION!

UH OH, IT'S
SHRINKING
NOW, IN FRONT
OF FABLE...

THIS IS BIZARRE. WHY'S IT
TURNED INTO A LITTLE KID?

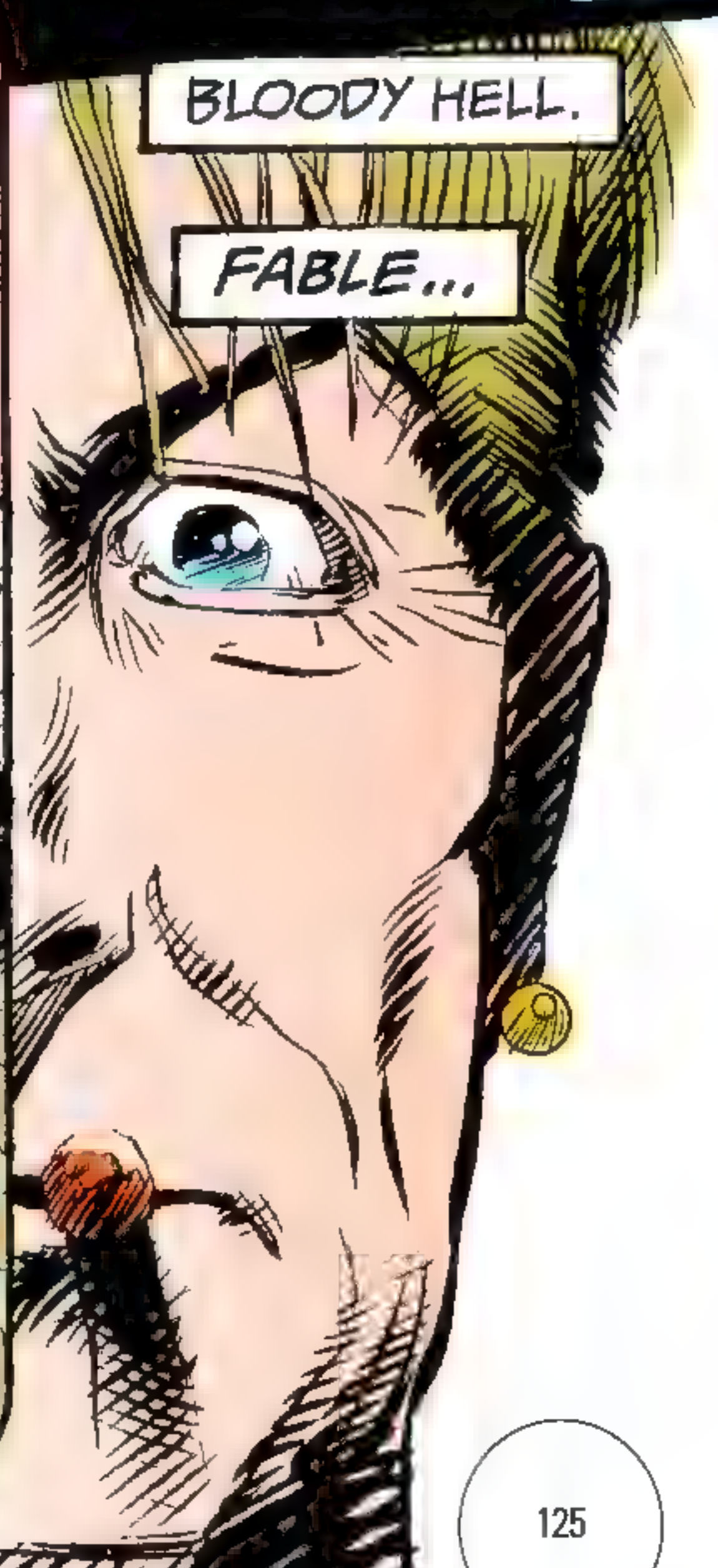
FABLE'S LOOKING
PRETTY SPACED-OUT,
TOO. WHAT'S HE
DOING TO HER...?

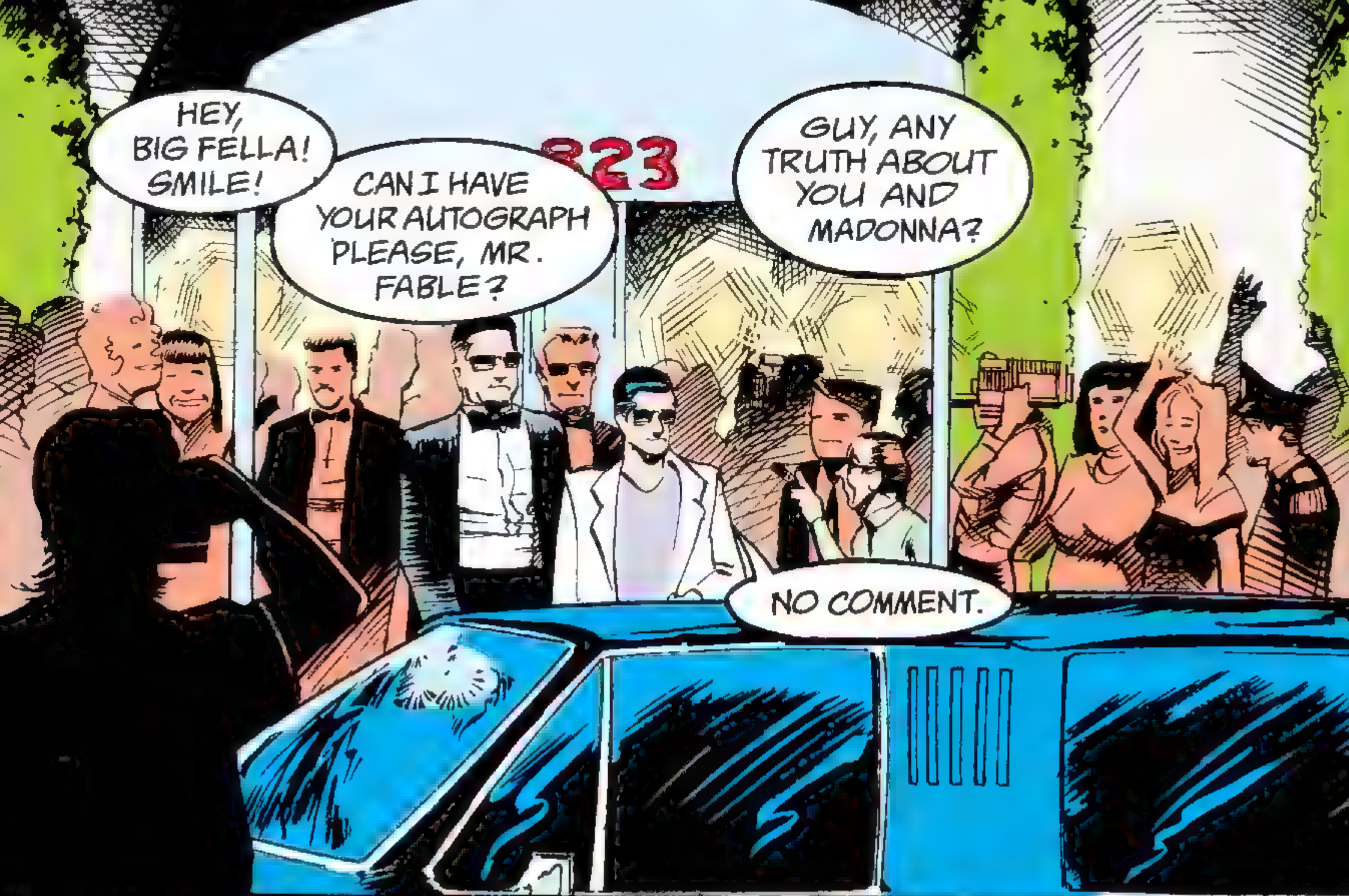
SHE'S RUNNING. HE'S
TRYING TO STOP HER...

GRABBING HOLD OF
HER, SHE'S STRUGGLING,
CRYING, HE...

BLOODY HELL.

FABLE...



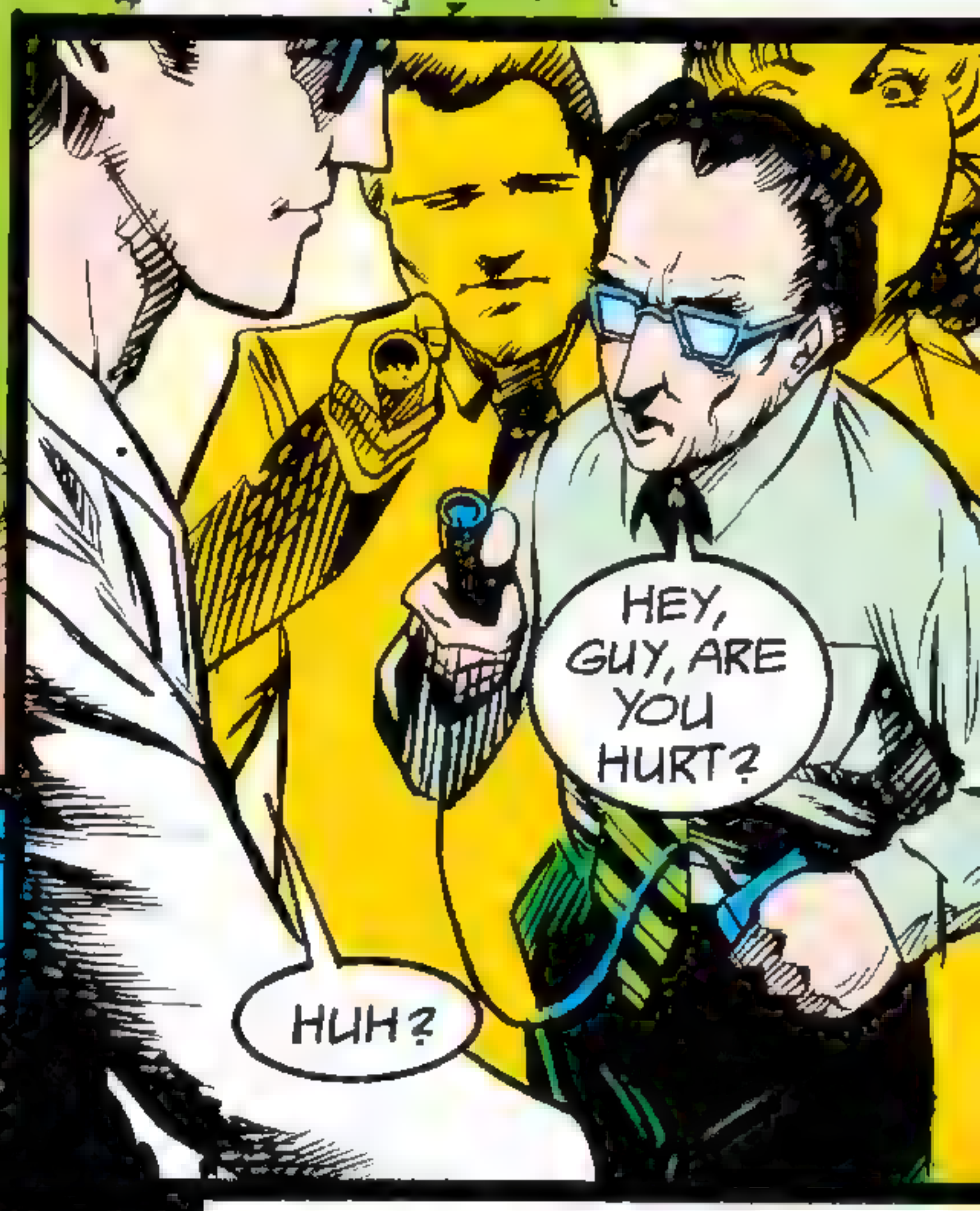


HEY, BIG FELLA! SMILE!

CAN I HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPH PLEASE, MR. FABLE?

GUY, ANY TRUTH ABOUT YOU AND MADONNA?

NO COMMENT.



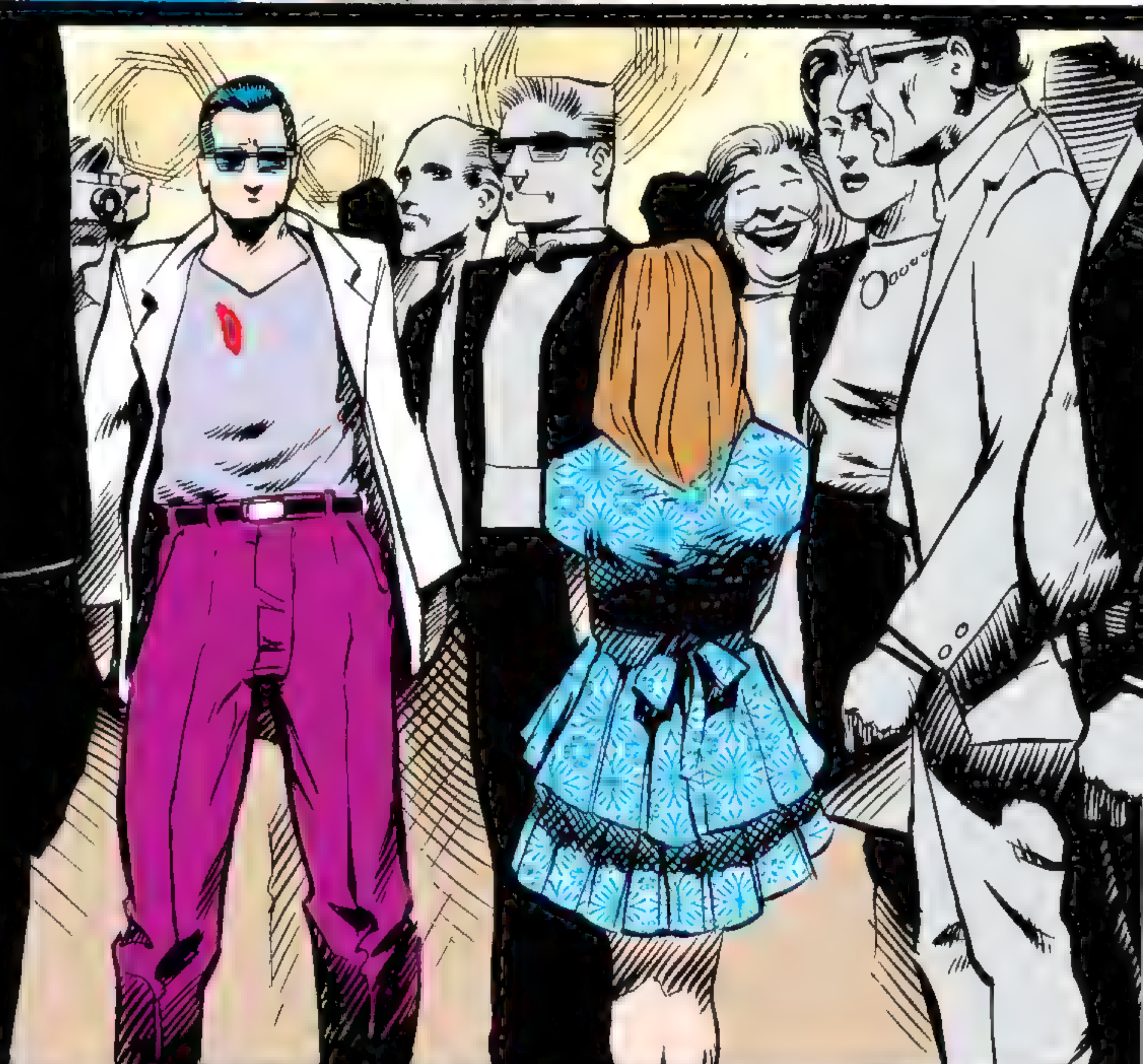
HEY, GUY, ARE YOU HURT?

HUH?



JESUS. BLOOD... I...

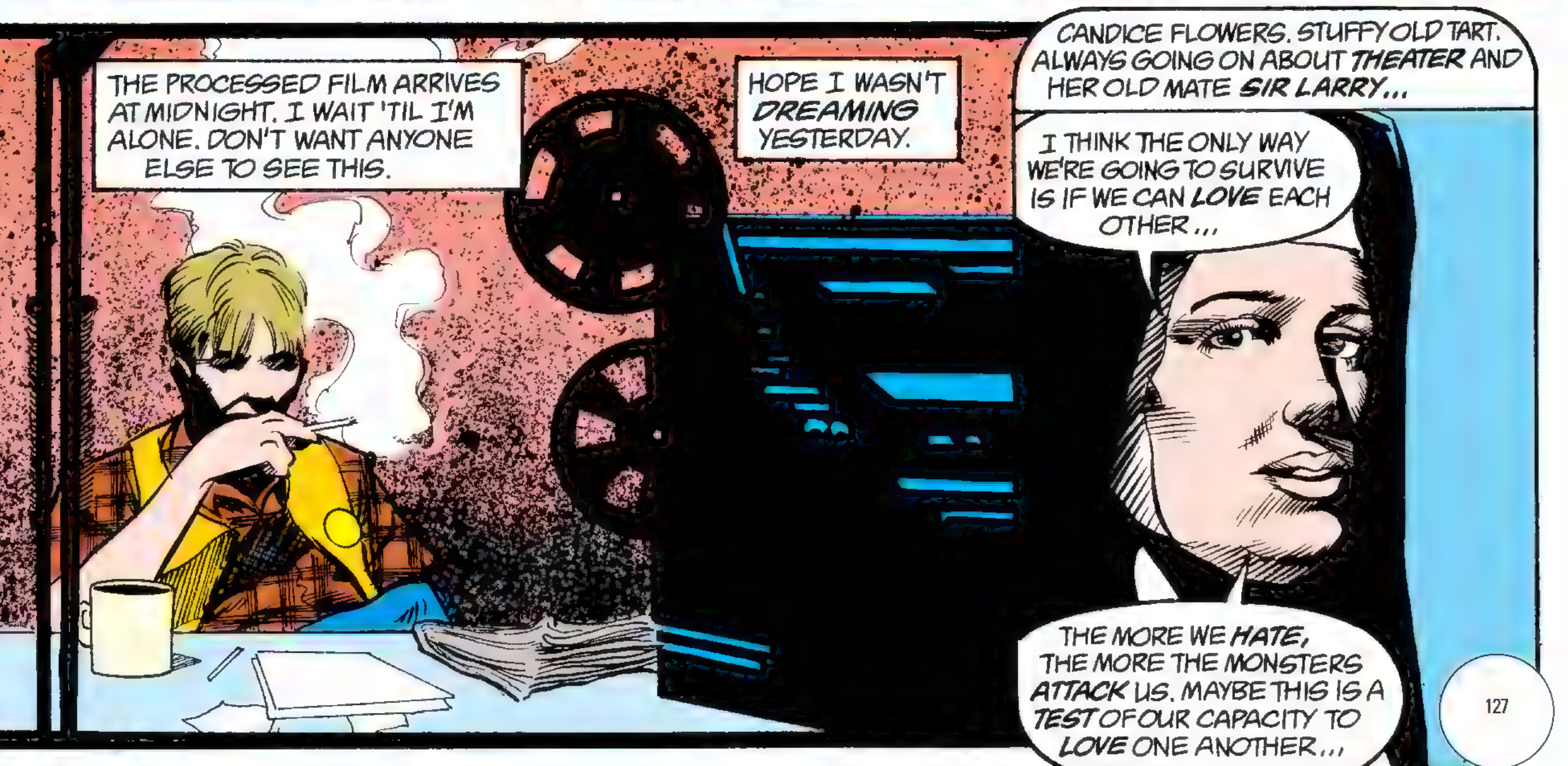
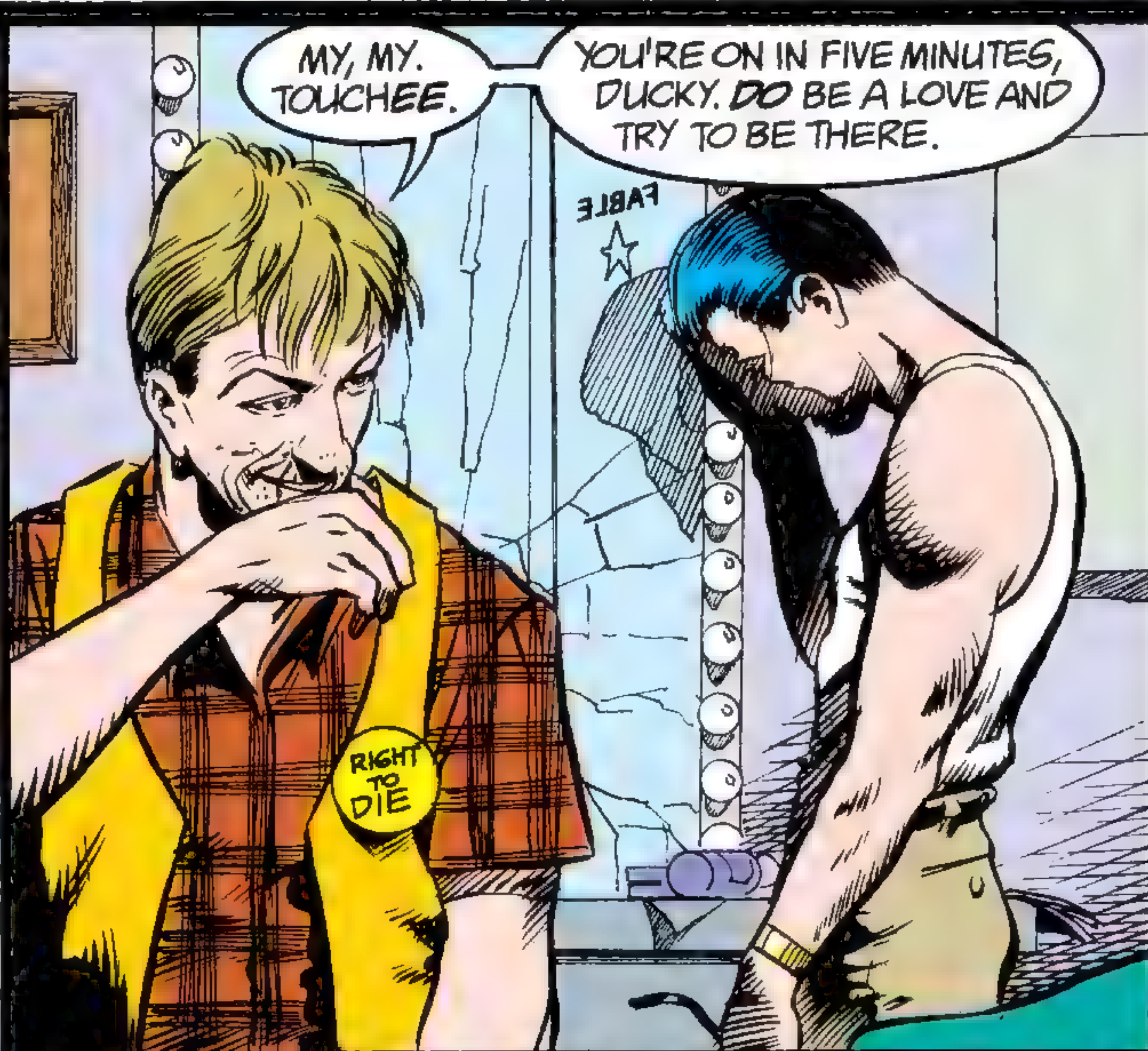
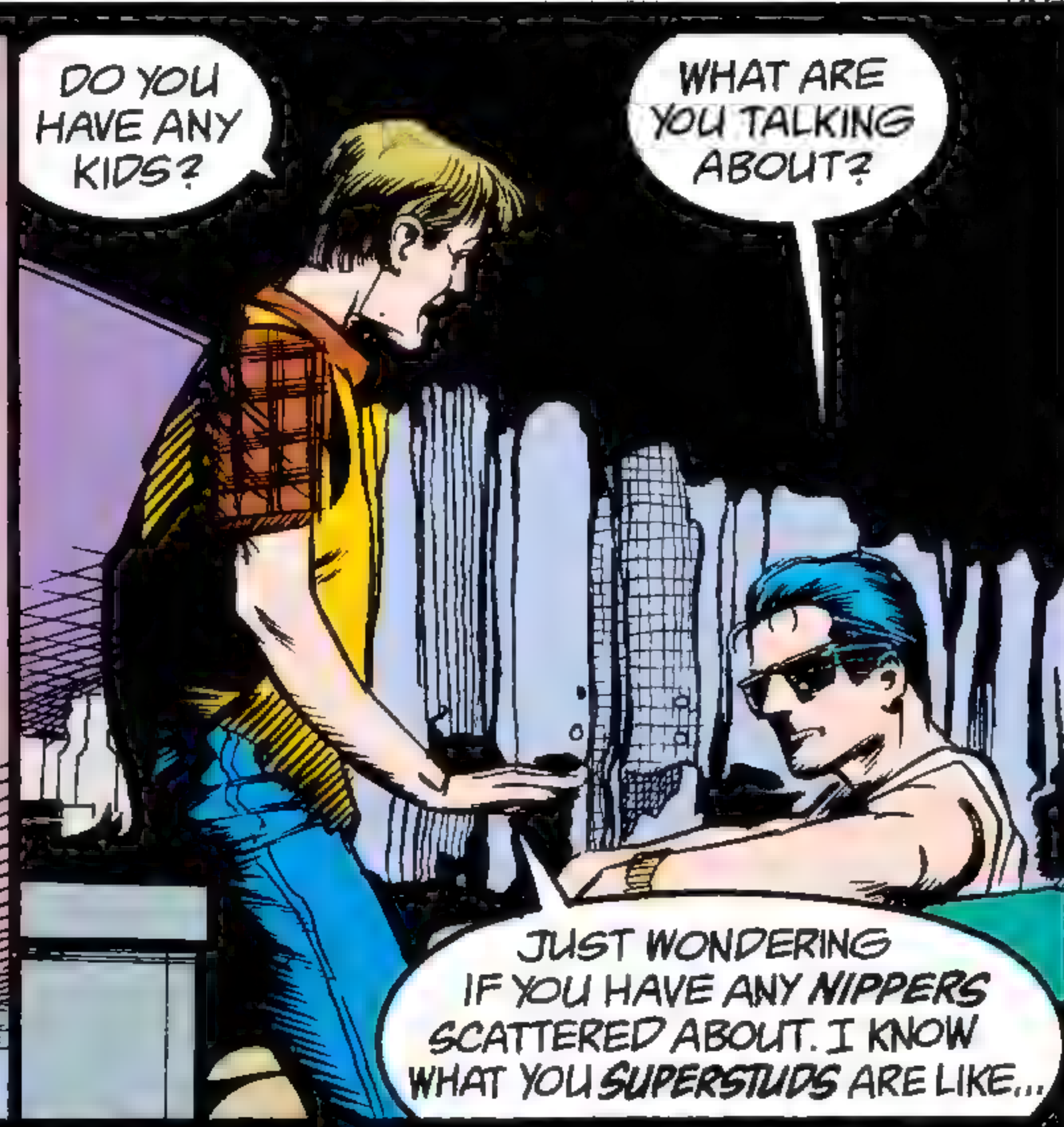
WHERE'S IT COMING FROM? I AIN'T CUT OR ANYTHING...



OKAY, CAN WE HAVE SOME QUIET? WE GOTTA TIGHT SCHEDULE TODAY.

WHERE THE HELL IS FABLE?

STILL IN HIS DRESSING ROOM. DOES NOT LOOK HAPPY.





HOLD IT.
WHAT'S
HAPPENING
TO HER
FACE?

A PRIEST ONCE GAVE ME A
DEFINITION OF *HELL*. HE SAID
IT WAS FULL OF PEOPLE WHO
WERE *STARVING*, ALTHOUGH THE
PLACE WAS FULL OF FOOD...



SCARS! *COSMETIC SURGERY* SCARS! OH,
INCREDIBLE! CANDICE FLOWERS, THE *SERIOUS*
ACTRESS, HAS HAD A *FACE LIFT*!

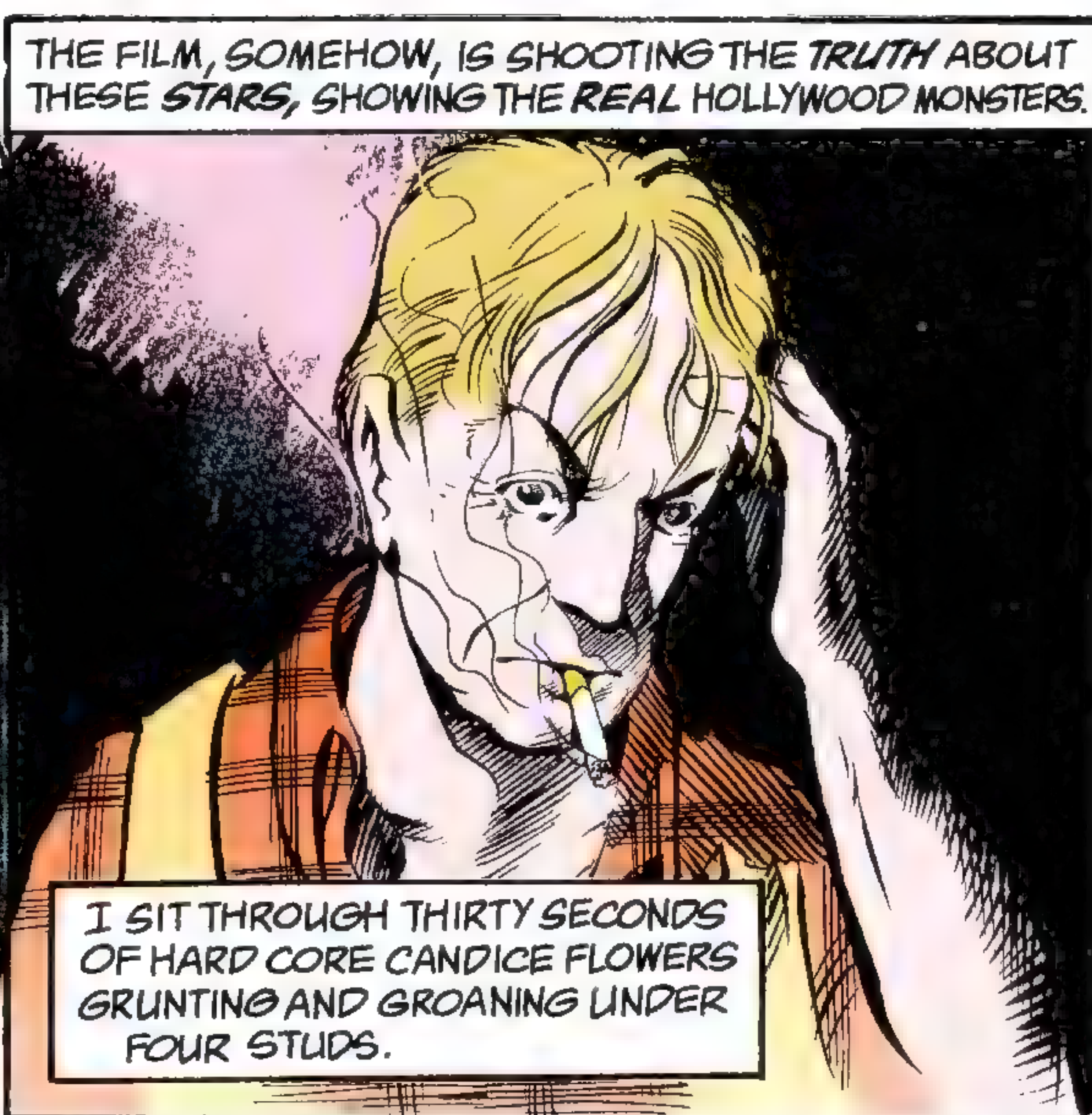
THE PROBLEM
WAS THEIR
FINGERNAILS
WERE SO LONG
THEY COULDN'T
FEED THEM-
SELVES, SO THEY
STARVED...

I ASKED HIM
WHAT *HEAVEN* WAS LIKE.
HE SAID IT WAS *EXACTLY*
THE SAME.



HELLO PICTURE'S CHANGED ALL GRAINY...
BLEEDING HECK, IT'S A *PORNO MOVIE*! CANDICE
CAN'T BE MORE THAN *SIXTEEN*! THIS IS *WONDERFUL*!

THE ONLY DIFFERENCE,
HE SAID, WAS THAT IN
HEAVEN THEY HAVE LEARNED
TO *FEED EACH OTHER...*



THE FILM, SOMEHOW, IS SHOOTING THE *TRUTH* ABOUT
THESE *STARS*, SHOWING THE *REAL HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS*.

I SIT THROUGH THIRTY SECONDS
OF *HARD CORE* CANDICE FLOWERS
GRUNTING AND GROANING UNDER
FOUR *STUDS*.



AND THEN *MACHO MAN*
COMES ON AGAIN...

I DIDN'T
WANNA HURTHER.
I JUST WANTED TO
WALK WITH HER, THEN
I JUST WANTED TO
TOUCH HER. NOTHING
DIRTY...

NOTHING LIKE *THAT*.
I JUST WANTED...



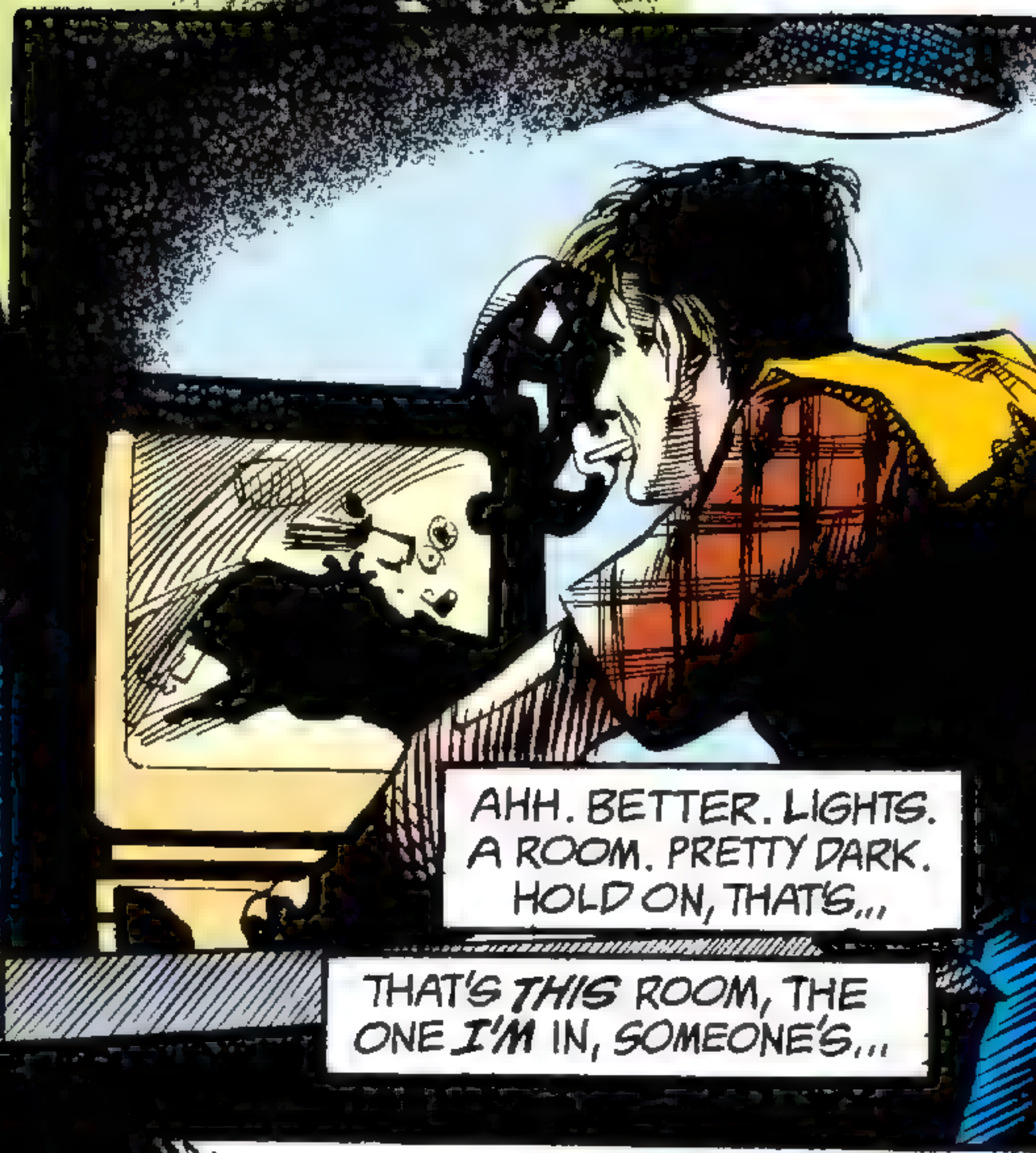
BUT SHE STARTED *RUNNING*. WHY? I WOULDN'T
HURT HER! I GOT SCARED. SHE MIGHT *TELL*
SOMEONE. MAKE IT SOUND WORSE
THAN IT WAS...

I RAN AFTER HER, JUST
TO *TALK* TO HER, BUT SHE
KEPT *RUNNING*, I...



SHIT! DON'T DIE ON ME NOW! WHAT HAPPENED?! WHAT DID HE DO...?

COME ON, BABY. DON'T LET EDDIE DOWN NOW...



AHH. BETTER. LIGHTS. A ROOM. PRETTY DARK. HOLD ON, THAT'S...

THAT'S *THIS* ROOM, THE ONE *I'M* IN, SOMEONE'S...



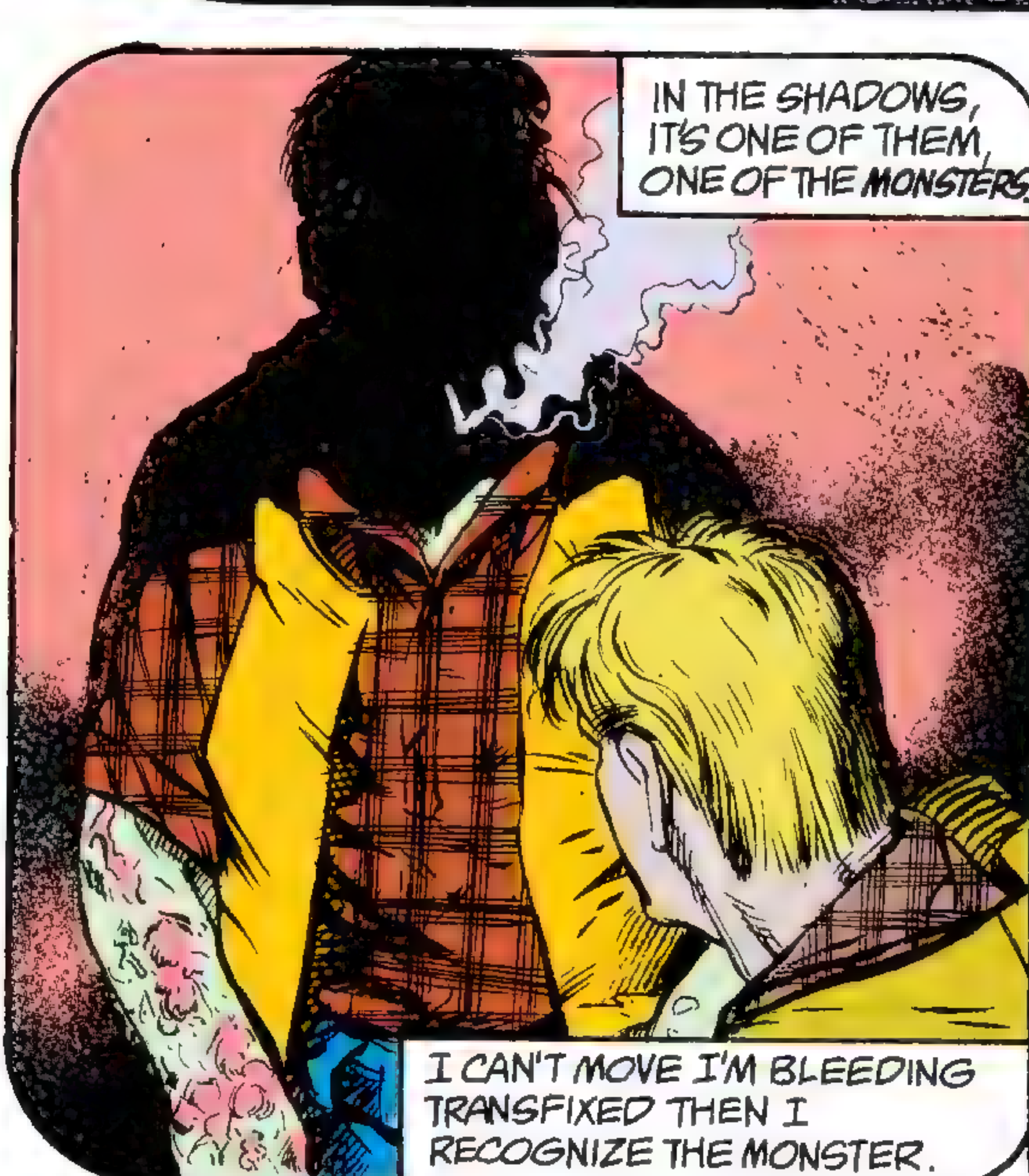
IT'S ME! I'M LOOKING AT THE RUSHES. OH... I DON'T THINK I LIKE THIS, I...

WAIT! SOMETHING'S THERE! BEHIND ME. TURN ROUND! SOMEONE'S BEHIND YOU!



THANK GOD, I TURN, AND... WHAT DO I SEE? COME ON, WHAT DO I SEE?

I'M OPENING MY MOUTH BUT NOTHING'S COMING OUT...AND...



IN THE SHADOWS, IT'S ONE OF THEM, ONE OF THE MONSTERS.

I CAN'T MOVE I'M BLEEDING TRANSFIXED THEN I RECOGNIZE THE MONSTER.



IT'S ME!

IT'S ME!



OH GOD.

MY FACE! IT'S RIPPING MY FACE OFF...

OH SHIT...

ENOUGH. THIS IS CRAZY.
MAYBE IT'S ALL IN MY HEAD.

TOO MUCH BRANDY AND
NOSE POWDER. MAYBE I...

WHAT'S THAT? IN THE
CORNER? MOVING? NO...

OH
GOD,
NO...

NOOOOAAAAAH

GEE, HARVEY,
THIS IS HORRIBLE.
I WANNA GO HOME...

THIS
ISN'T THE
NEW TOM
HANKS
MOVIE.

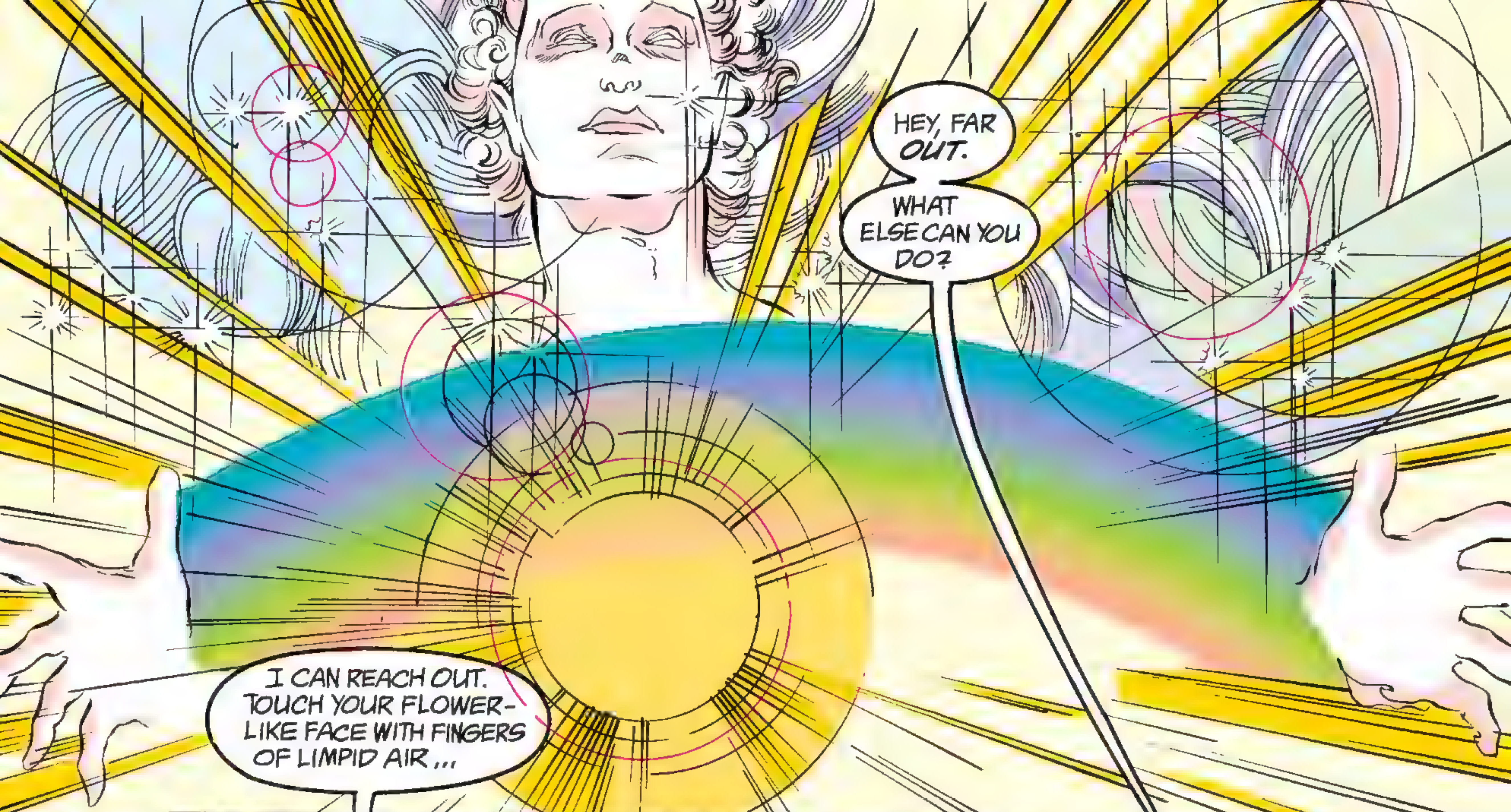
IT SAID
TOM HANKS
OUTSIDE,
IRENE.

TOM HANKS
IN "AW SHUCKS
MOMMA'S TURNED
INTO A BULLPIT
TERRIER,"
THAT'S WHAT
IT SAID.

SEE, IT SAYS
TOM... OH...

"THE AMERICAN
SCREAM"? WHAT KINDA
MOVIE'S THAT, HARVEY?

THE
AMERICAN
SCREAM



HEY, FAR
OUT.
WHAT
ELSE CAN YOU
DO?

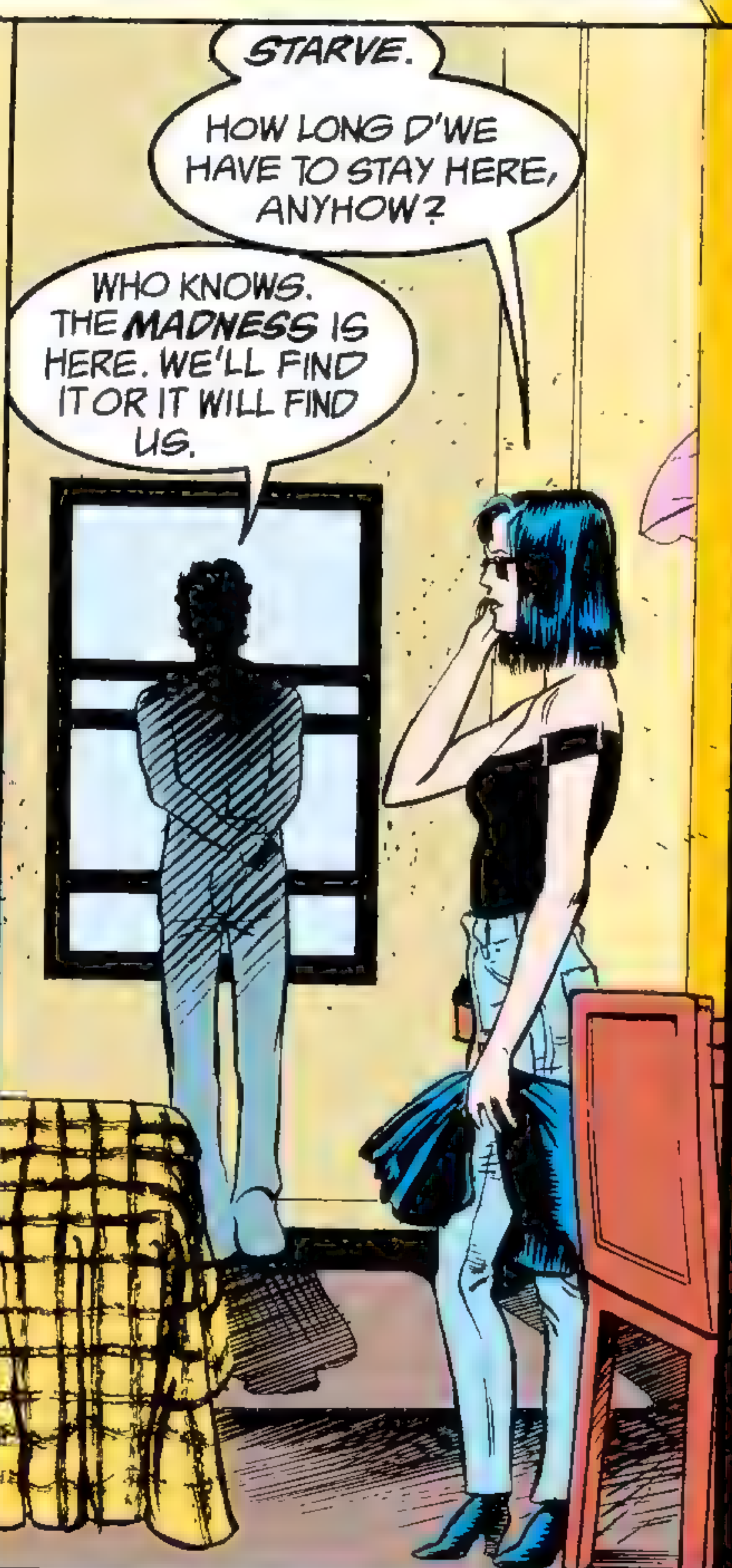
I CAN REACH OUT.
TOUCH YOUR FLOWER-
LIKE FACE WITH FINGERS
OF LIMPID AIR...



YEAH. VERY CUTE.

HOW MUCH MONEY D'WE
HAVE LEFT? I'VE GOT A HOLE
WHERE MY STOMACH USED
TO BE.

A FEW
DOLLARS. WHAT
DO YOU DO IN
AMERICA ONCE
YOUR MONEY'S
RUN OUT?



STARVE.

HOW LONG D'WE
HAVE TO STAY HERE,
ANYHOW?

WHO KNOWS.
THE **MADNESS** IS
HERE. WE'LL FIND
IT OR IT WILL FIND
US.



TWO DAYS AGO WE WATCHED
THE SUNSET IN ARIZONA, THE
TEMPERATURE CRASHING AS
THE SUN WENT DOWN...

AT NIGHT KATHY ASKED ME
TO HOLD HER. JUST HOLD
HER. SHE SLEPT LIKE A
CHILD.

WE WERE GETTING GROCERIES
WHEN THE ROAD STARTED *DISTORTING*.
I FELT MY SPINE SHIVER AND KNEW
IT HAD FOUND ME AGAIN.

COLOR TV
AIR
CONDITIONING
ICE
CABLE

ED'S
GROCERY

GROCERY

THE MADNESS STREAM. IT'S MY
UMBILICAL CORD. SO DOES THAT
MAKE THE MADNESS MY MOTHER?

YEAH, I SUPPOSE
IT DOES.



I HELD ON TO KATHY.
I DIDN'T WANT TO
LOSE HER.

I WANTED TO BE WITH
HER WHEREVER THE
MADSTREAM TOOK US.

HOLLYWOOD...

MY GOD, IT'S
AWFUL. WHAT'S THIS
BROWN STUFF?

THAT'S THE
MEAT, STUPID.
IT'S A HAMBURGER.
WE HAVE TO GET
SOME MONEY.
MAYBE WE CAN
GET A JOB...

WILL
THIS
DO?

HEY! WHERE
DID YOU...?

NO. DON'T
TELL ME. YOU
MADE IT!

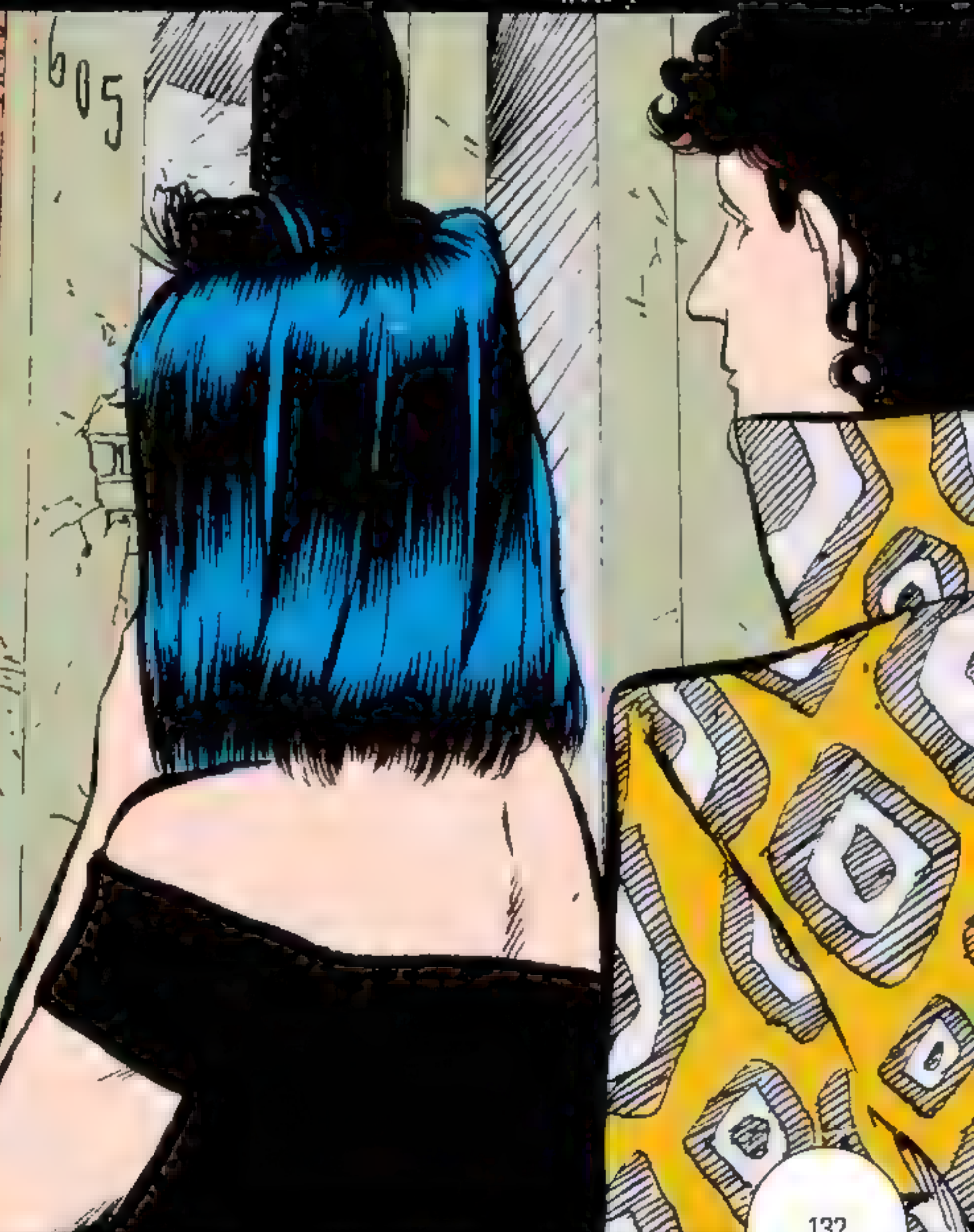
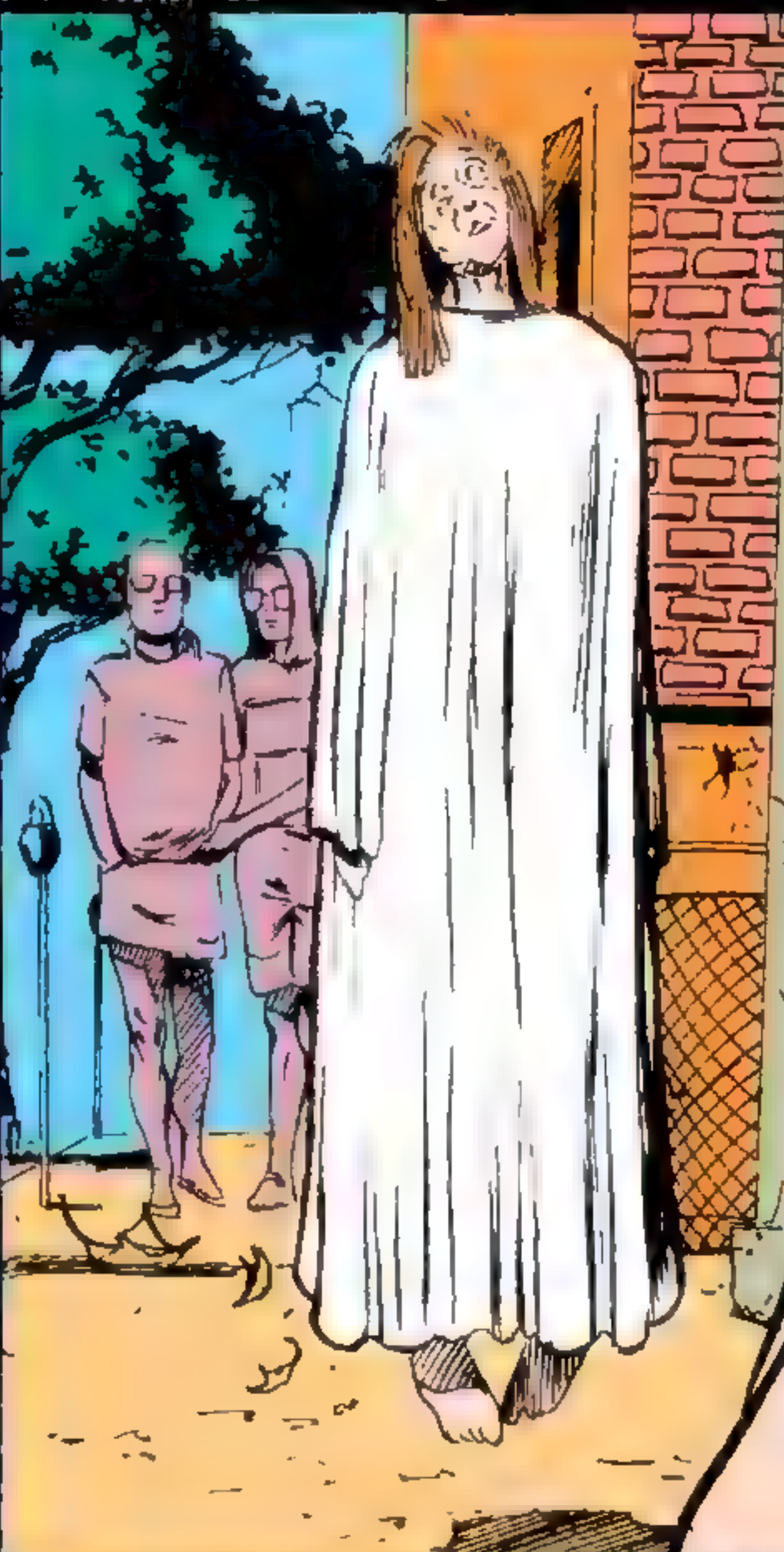


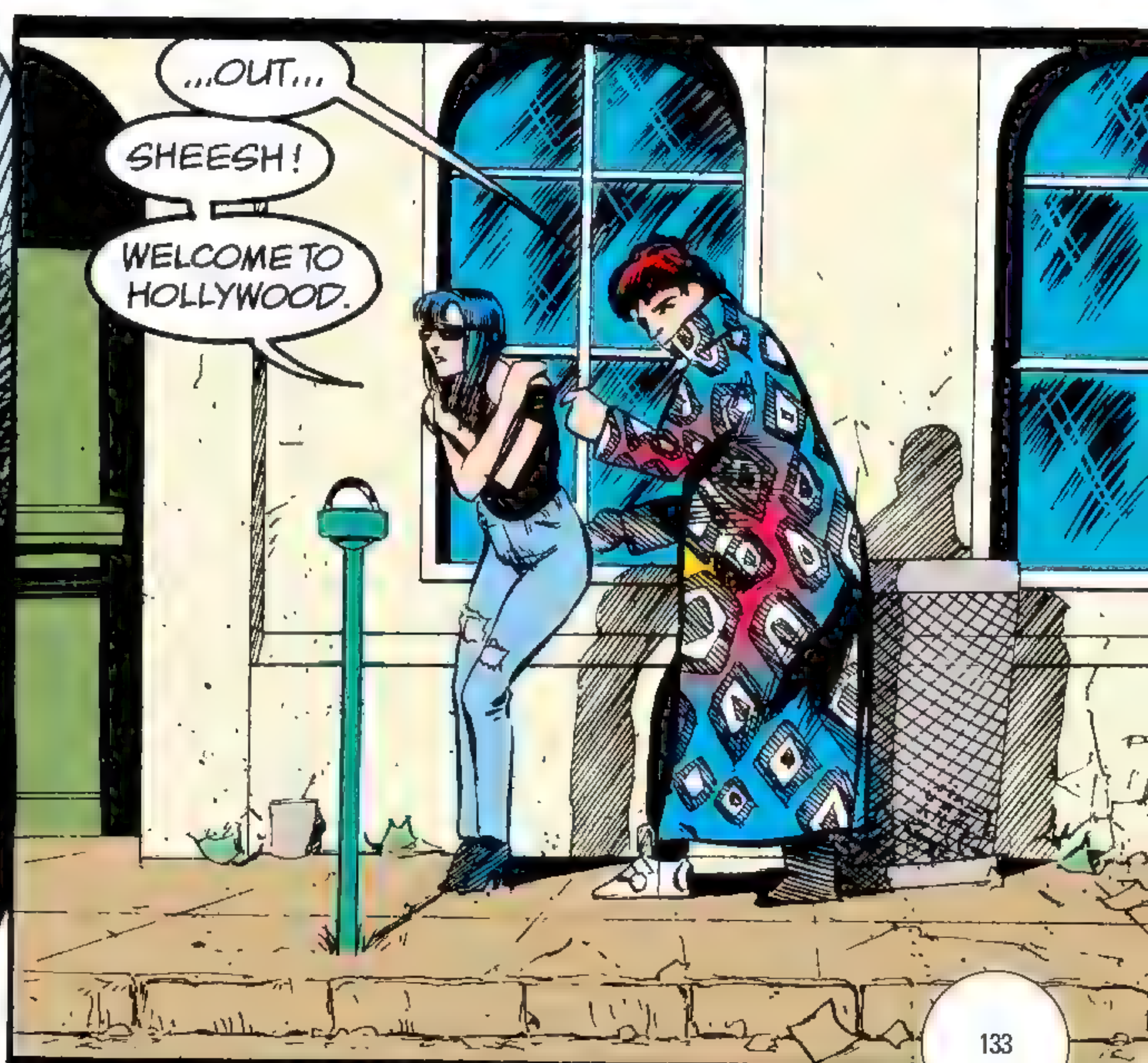
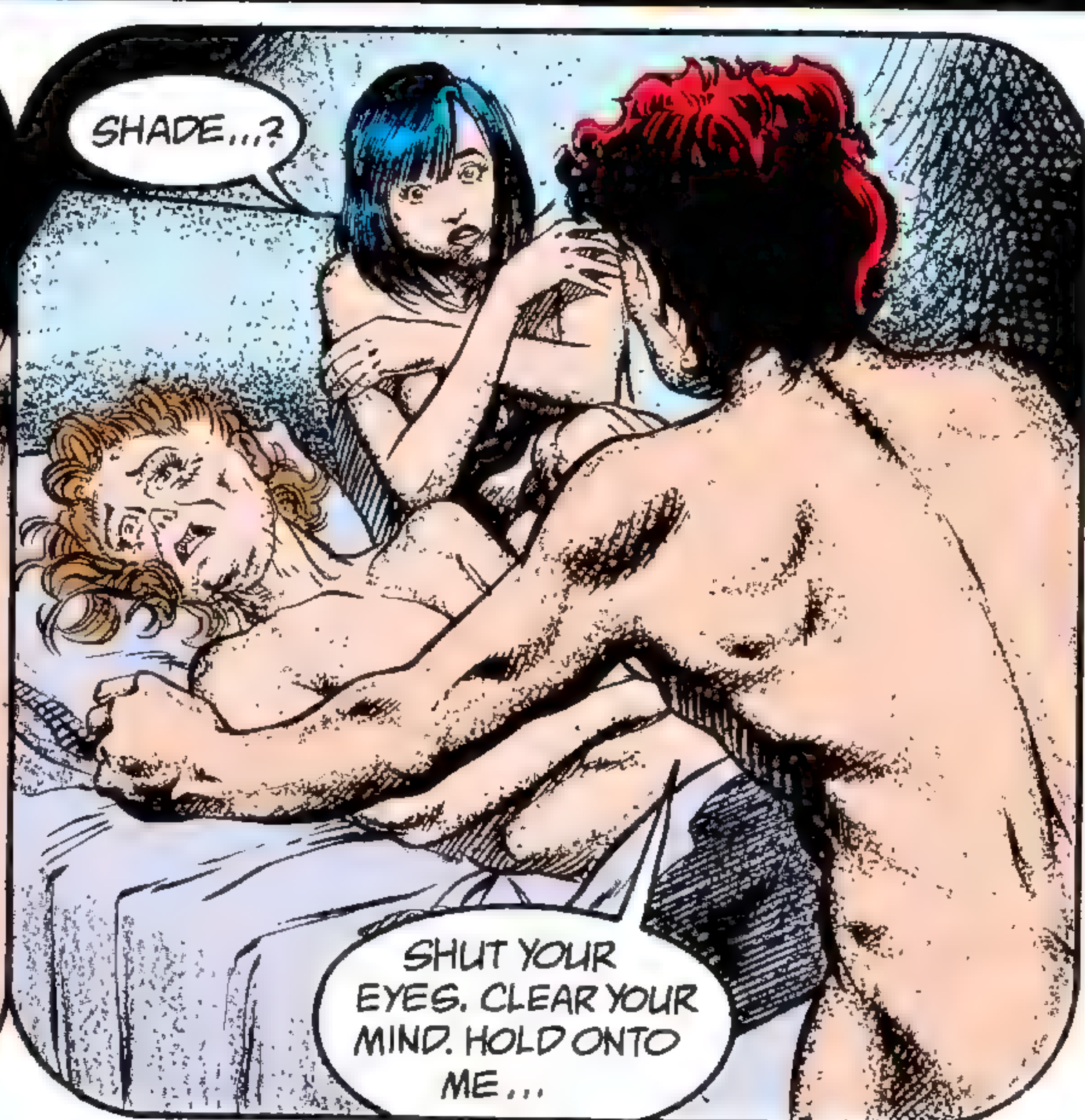
I'M NOT SURE HOW
LONG IT WOULD FOOL
ANYONE FOR...

DO YOU LIKE
THE BIRDS? SAPPHIRE
DOVES FROM THE
NORTHERN MOUNTAINS
OF META...

S-SURE,
SHADE.
WONDERFUL.

BUT I THINK
IT'S *STARTING*...

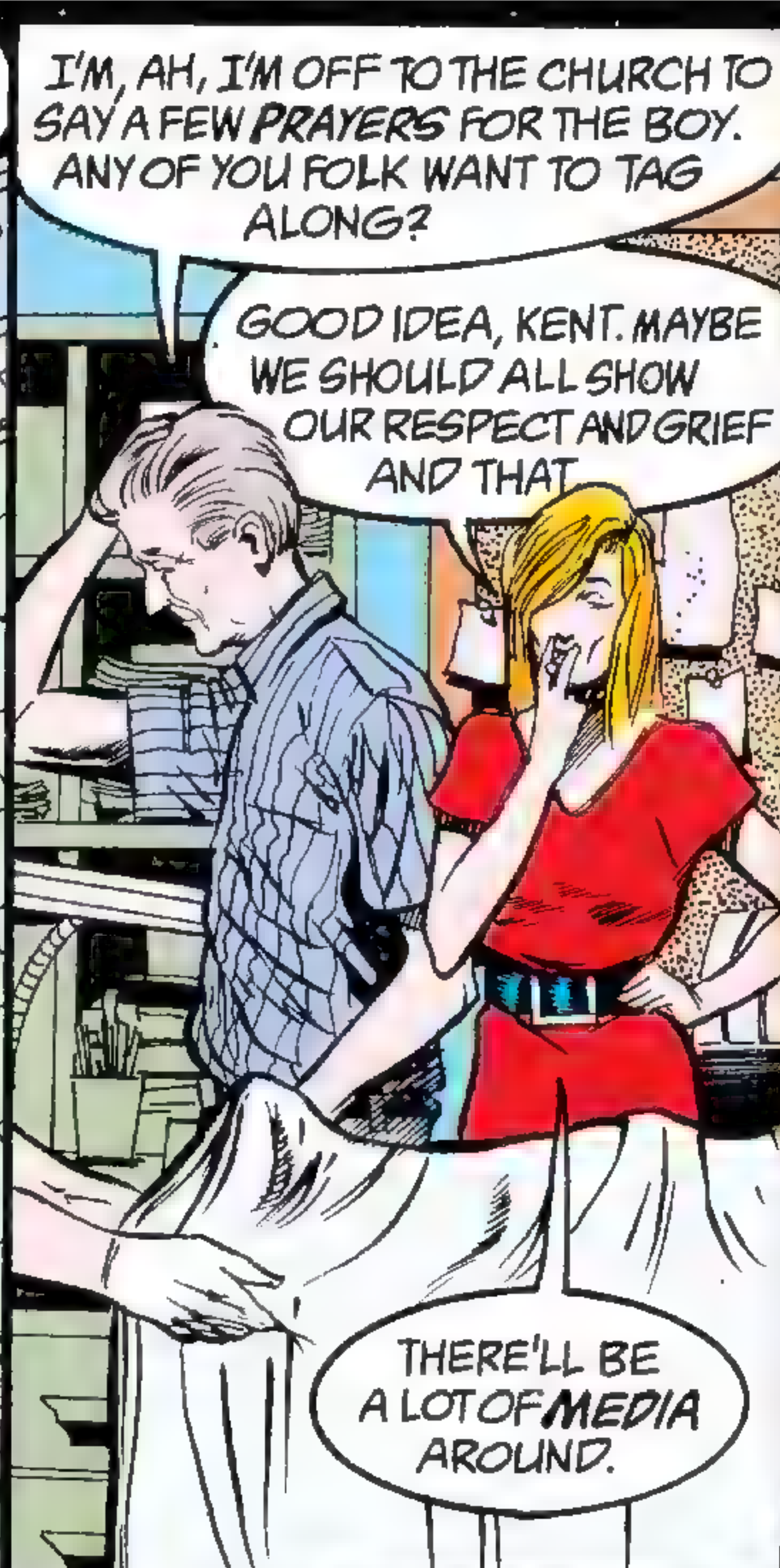






DID YOU SEE HIS FACE?
THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT!
WHO COULD DO THAT?

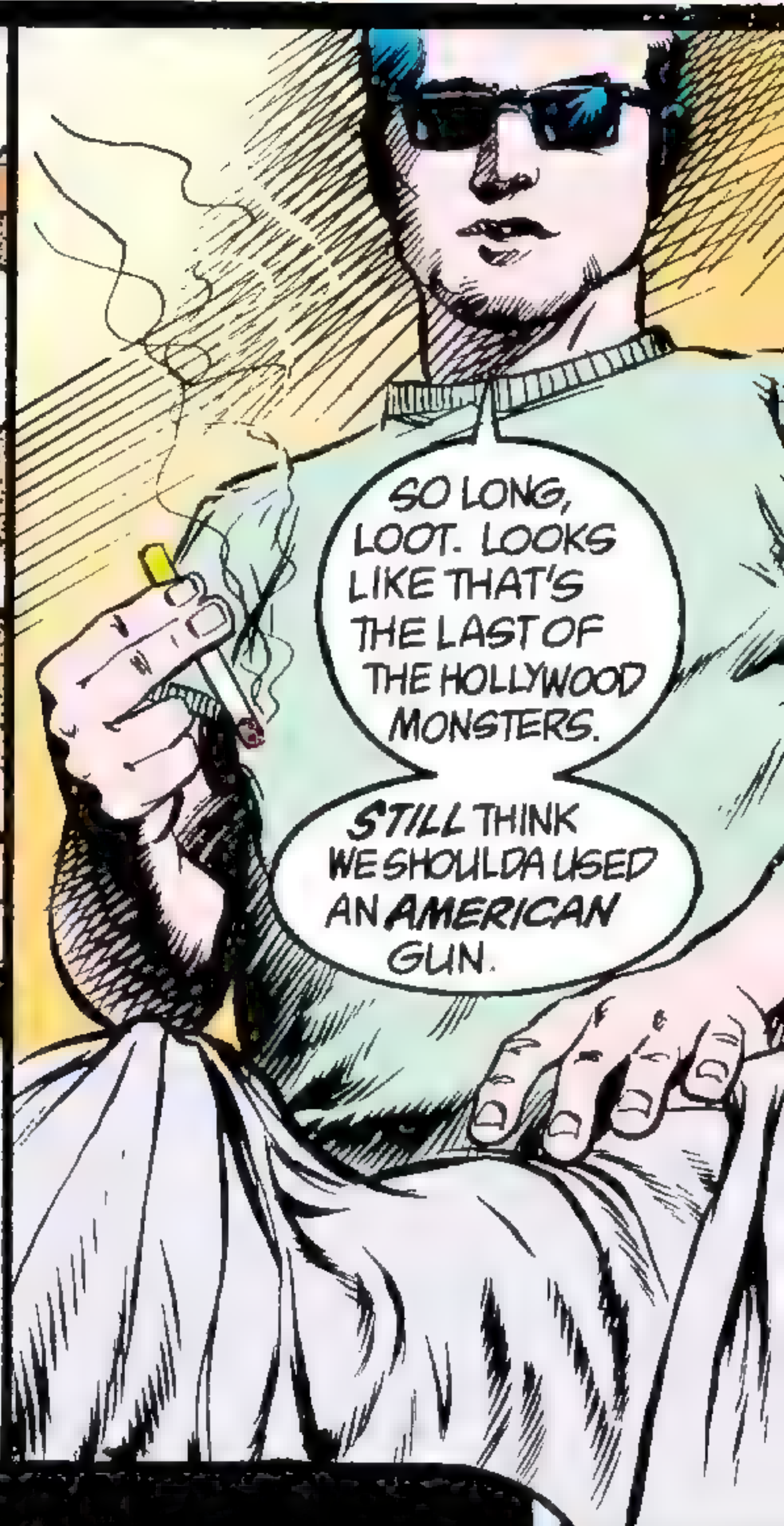
CHRIST KNOWS.
GUY FABLE ALWAYS
THOUGHT HE WAS
OVERRATED, BUT
NO ONE DESERVES
THAT.



I'M, AH, I'M OFF TO THE CHURCH TO
SAY A FEW PRAYERS FOR THE BOY.
ANY OF YOU FOLK WANT TO TAG
ALONG?

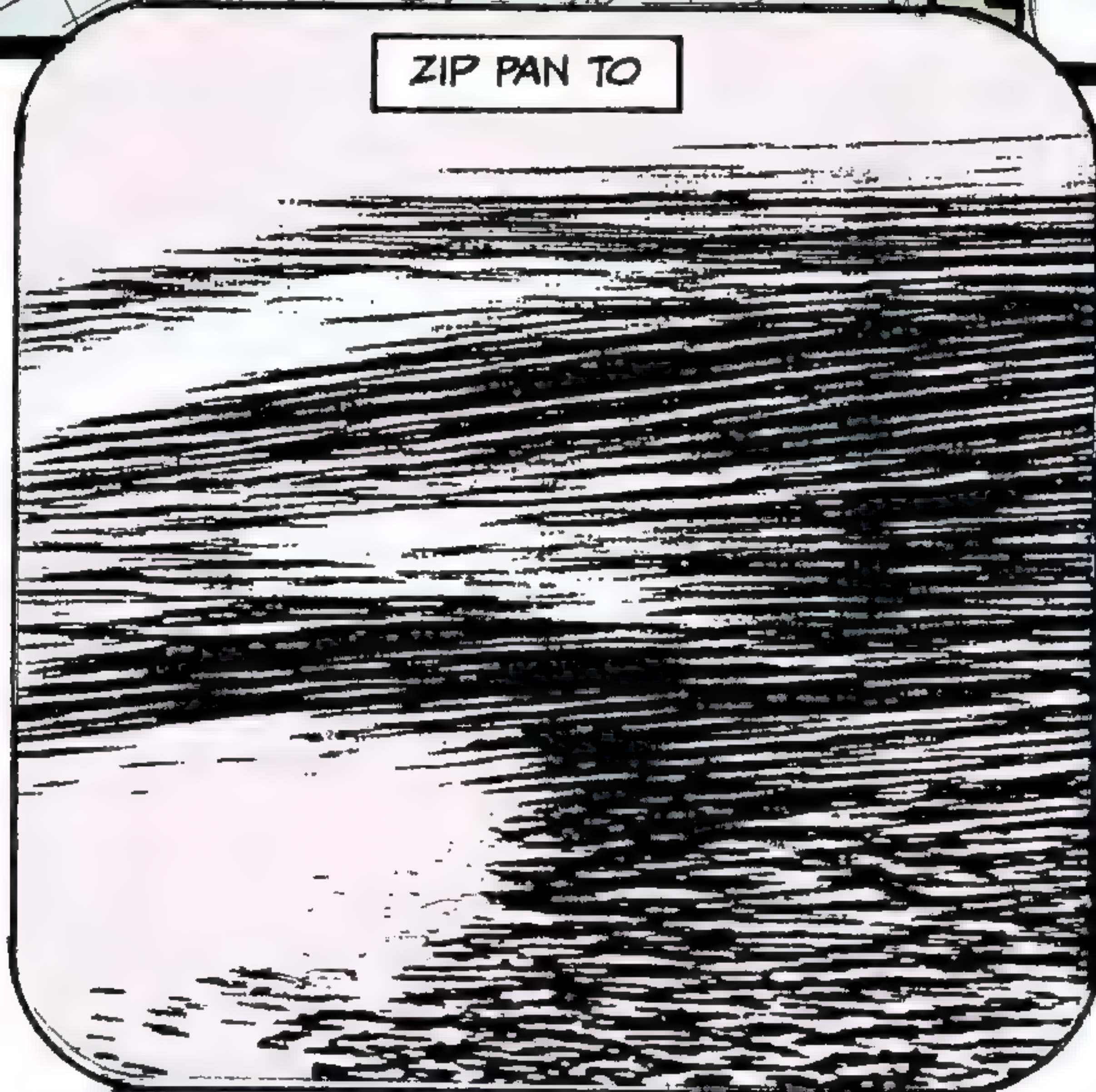
GOOD IDEA, KENT. MAYBE
WE SHOULD ALL SHOW
OUR RESPECT AND GRIEF
AND THAT.

THERE'LL BE
A LOT OF MEDIA
AROUND.

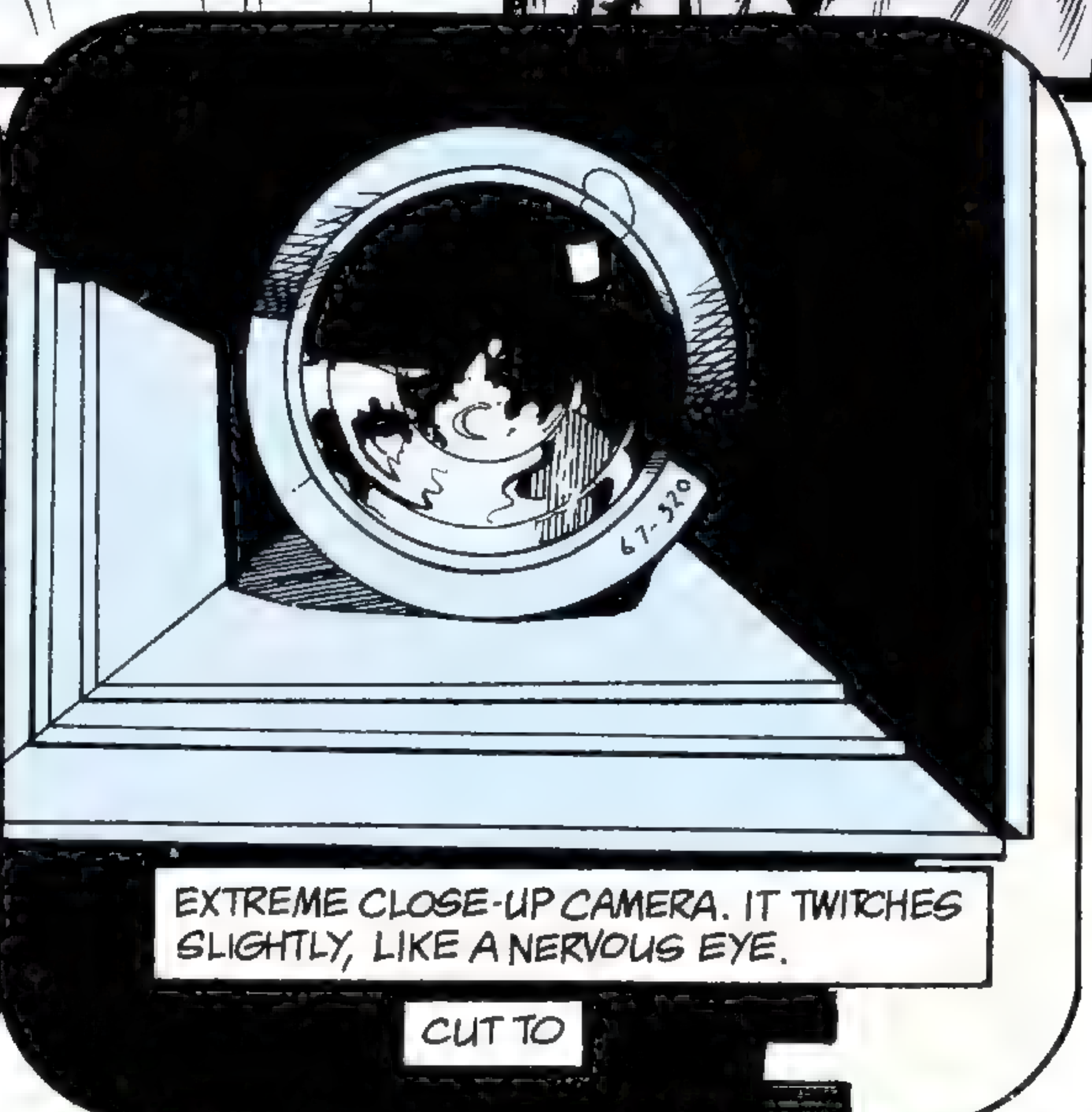


SO LONG,
LOOT. LOOKS
LIKE THAT'S
THE LAST OF
THE HOLLYWOOD
MONSTERS.

STILL THINK
WE SHOULD'VE USED
AN AMERICAN
GUN.

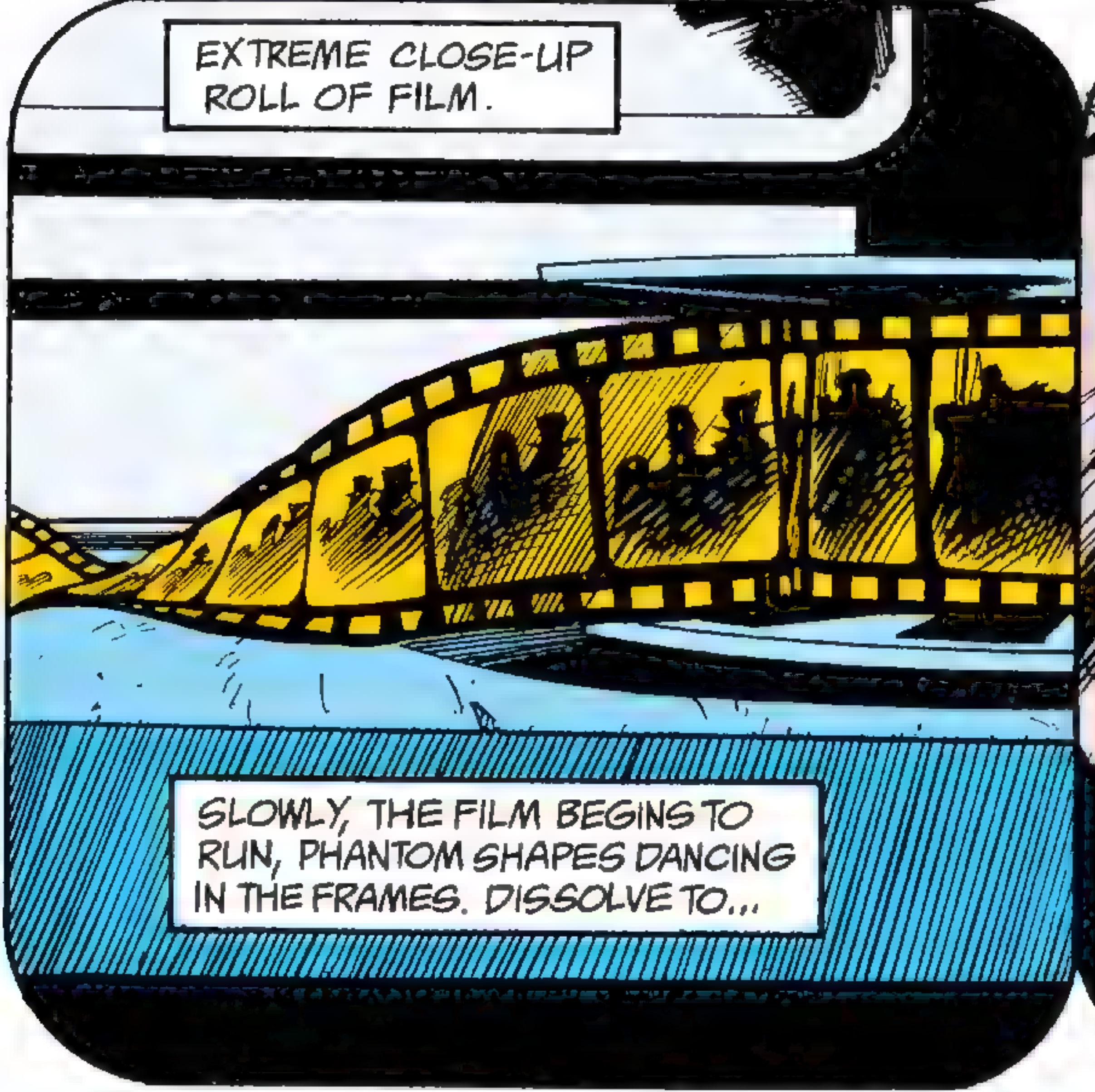


ZIP PAN TO



EXTREME CLOSE-UP CAMERA. IT TWITCHES
SLIGHTLY, LIKE A NERVOUS EYE.

CUT TO

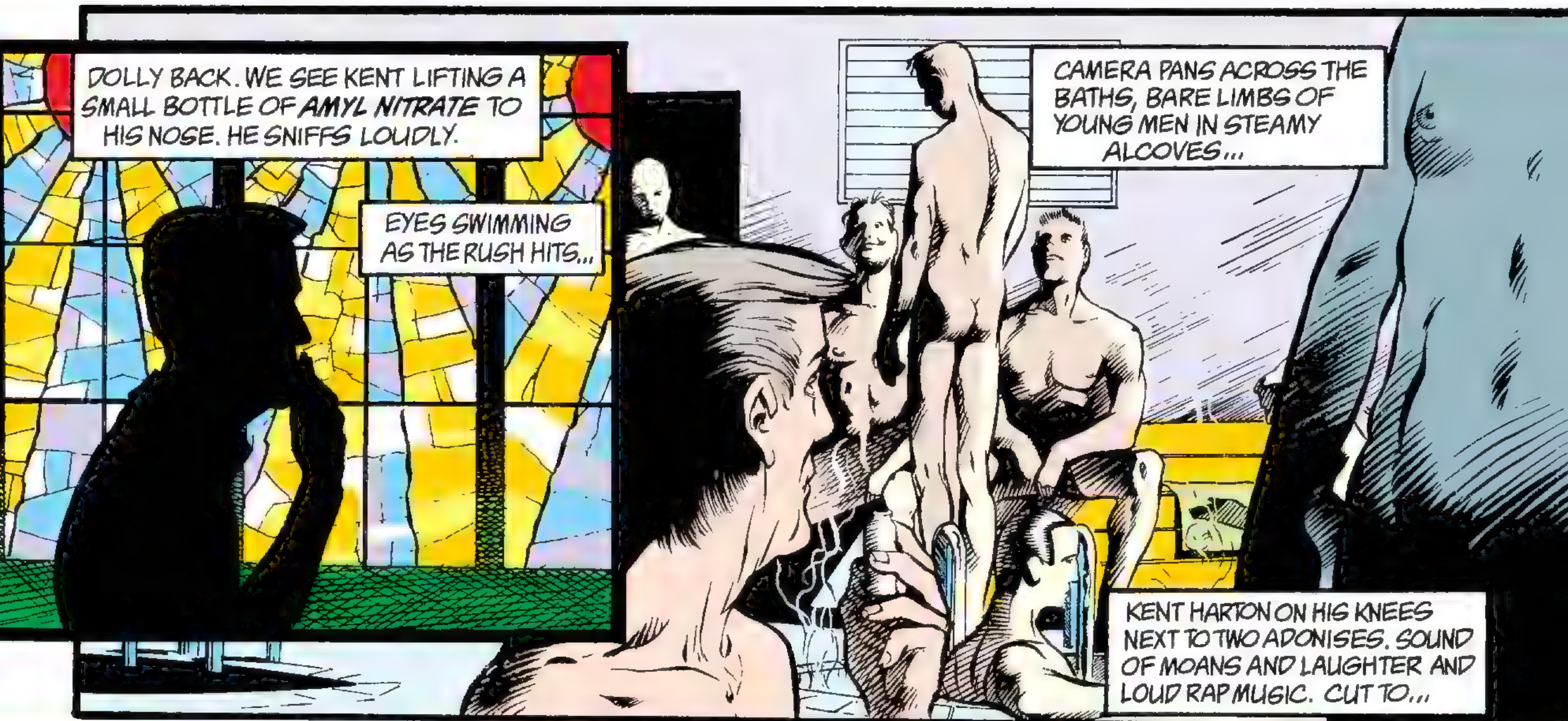


EXTREME CLOSE-UP
ROLL OF FILM.

SLOWLY, THE FILM BEGINS TO
RUN, PHANTOM SHAPES DANCING
IN THE FRAMES. DISSOLVE TO...



CLOSE-UP KENT
HARTON, HIS
CRUNCHED-UP
FACE DEEP IN
PRAYER...

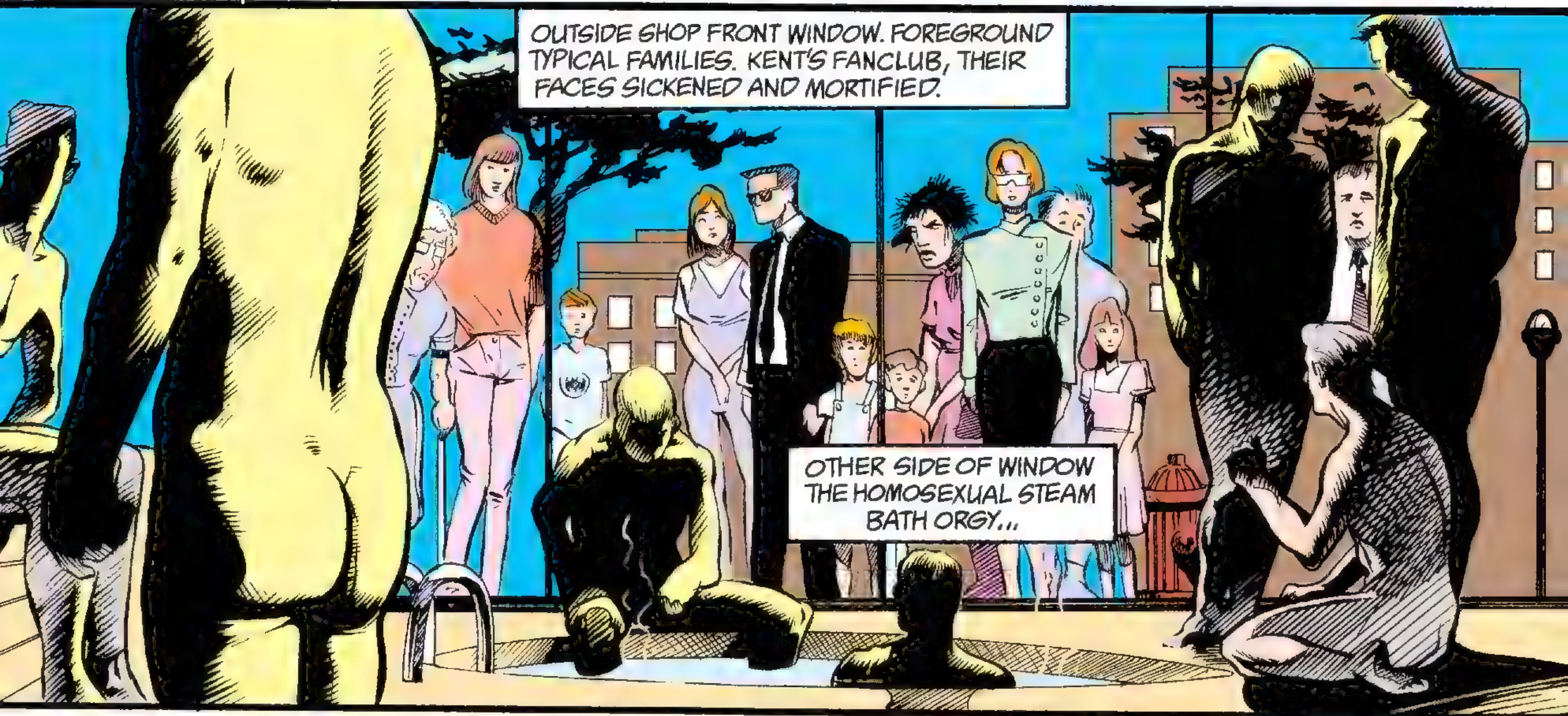


DOLLY BACK. WE SEE KENT LIFTING A SMALL BOTTLE OF AMYL NITRATE TO HIS NOSE. HE SNIFFS LOUDLY.

EYES SWIMMING AS THE RUSH HITS...

CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE BATHS, BARE LIMBS OF YOUNG MEN IN STEAMY ALCOVES...

KENT HARTON ON HIS KNEES NEXT TO TWO ADONISES. SOUND OF MOANS AND LAUGHTER AND LOUD RAP MUSIC. CUT TO...



OUTSIDE SHOP FRONT WINDOW. FOREGROUND TYPICAL FAMILIES. KENT'S FANCLUB, THEIR FACES SICKENED AND MORTIFIED.

OTHER SIDE OF WINDOW THE HOMOSEXUAL STEAM BATH ORGY...



MY GOD. I'VE HEARD OF OUTING, BUT...

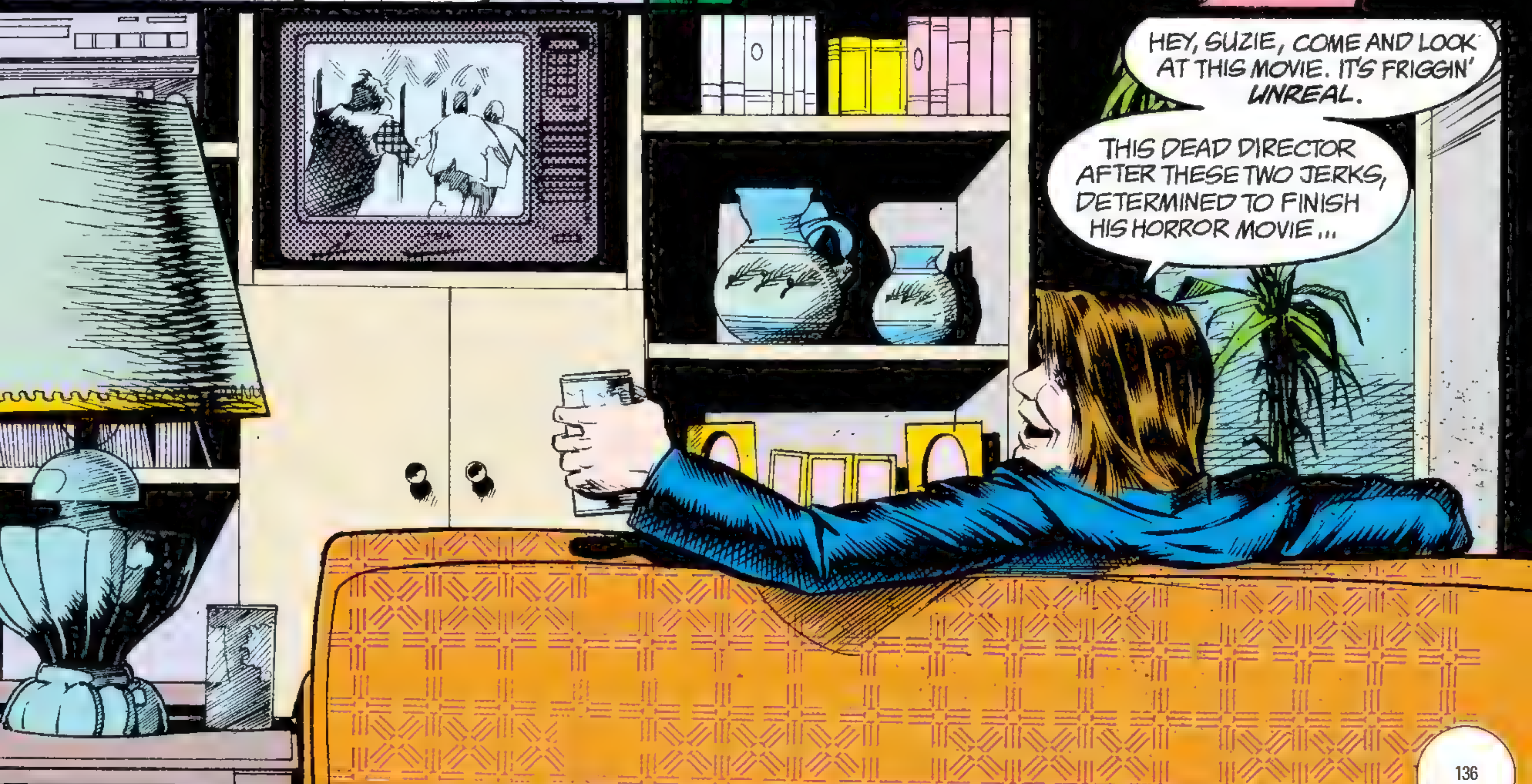
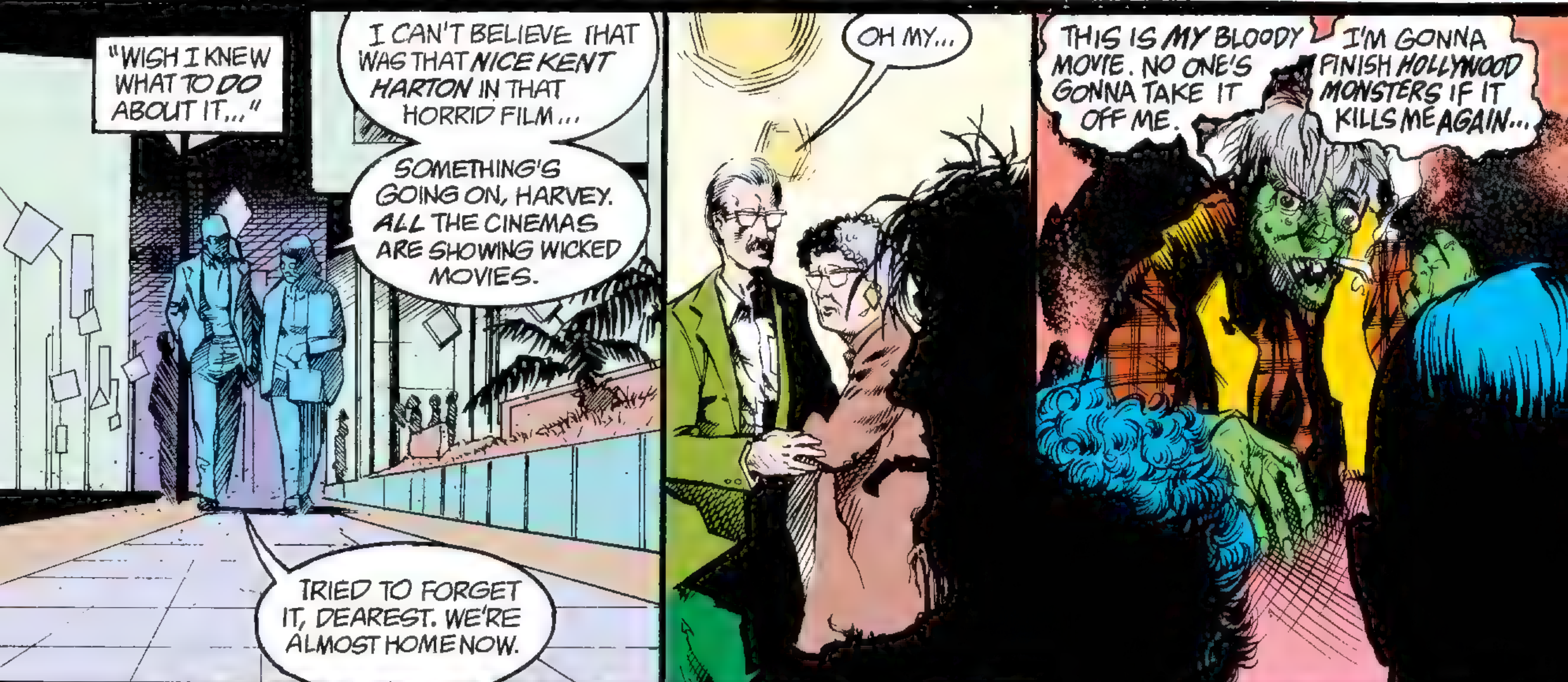
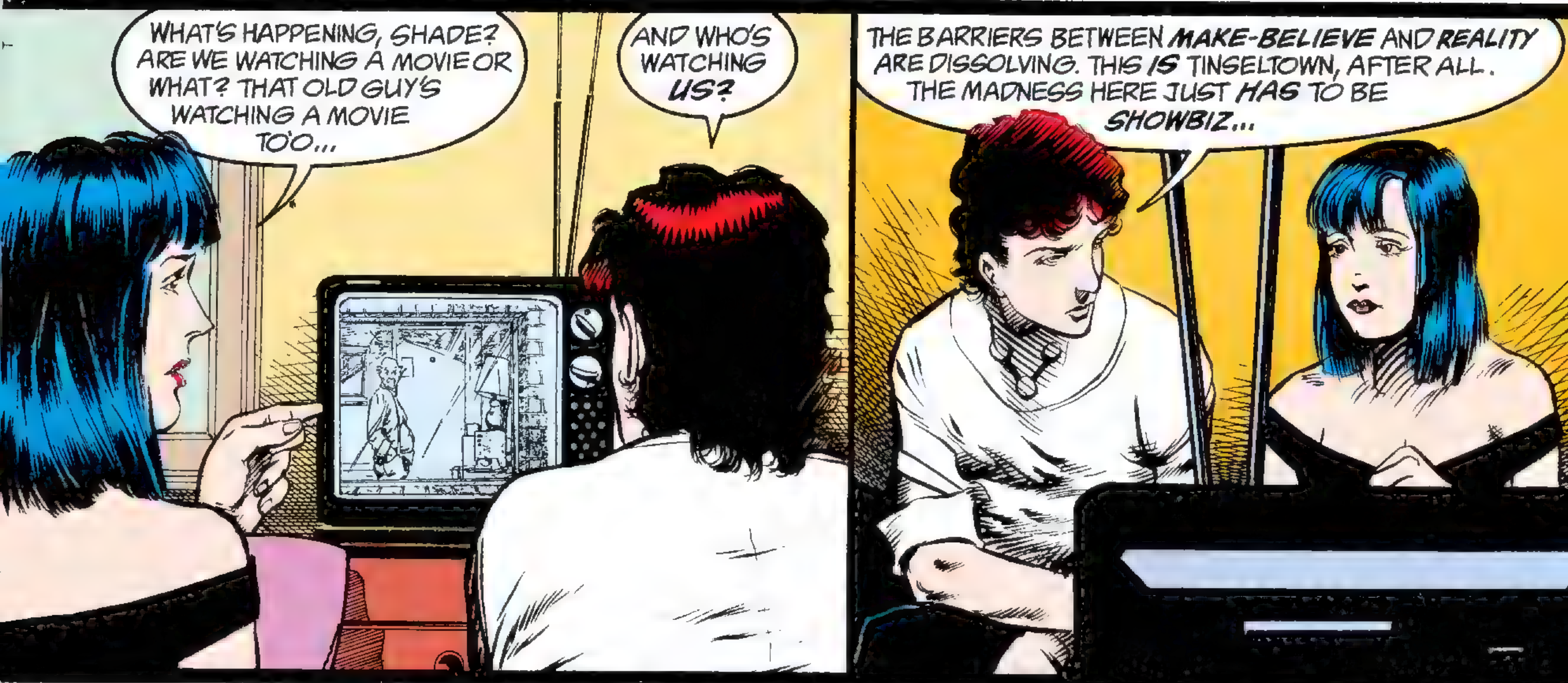
THIS REALLY MUST BE A MISTAKE. A PIRATE STATION? NO. GOOD LORD, POOR KENT. POOR, POOR KENT.



AM I GOING MAD? NO. MY HEART IS RACING. NOT THROUGH EXCITEMENT, THAT KIND OF THING MERCIFULLY LONG GONE FOR ME.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I THINK I WANT SOME FRESH AIR.

FRESH AIR. WHAT WOULD THEY THINK IN NEW YORK, CRISPIN?

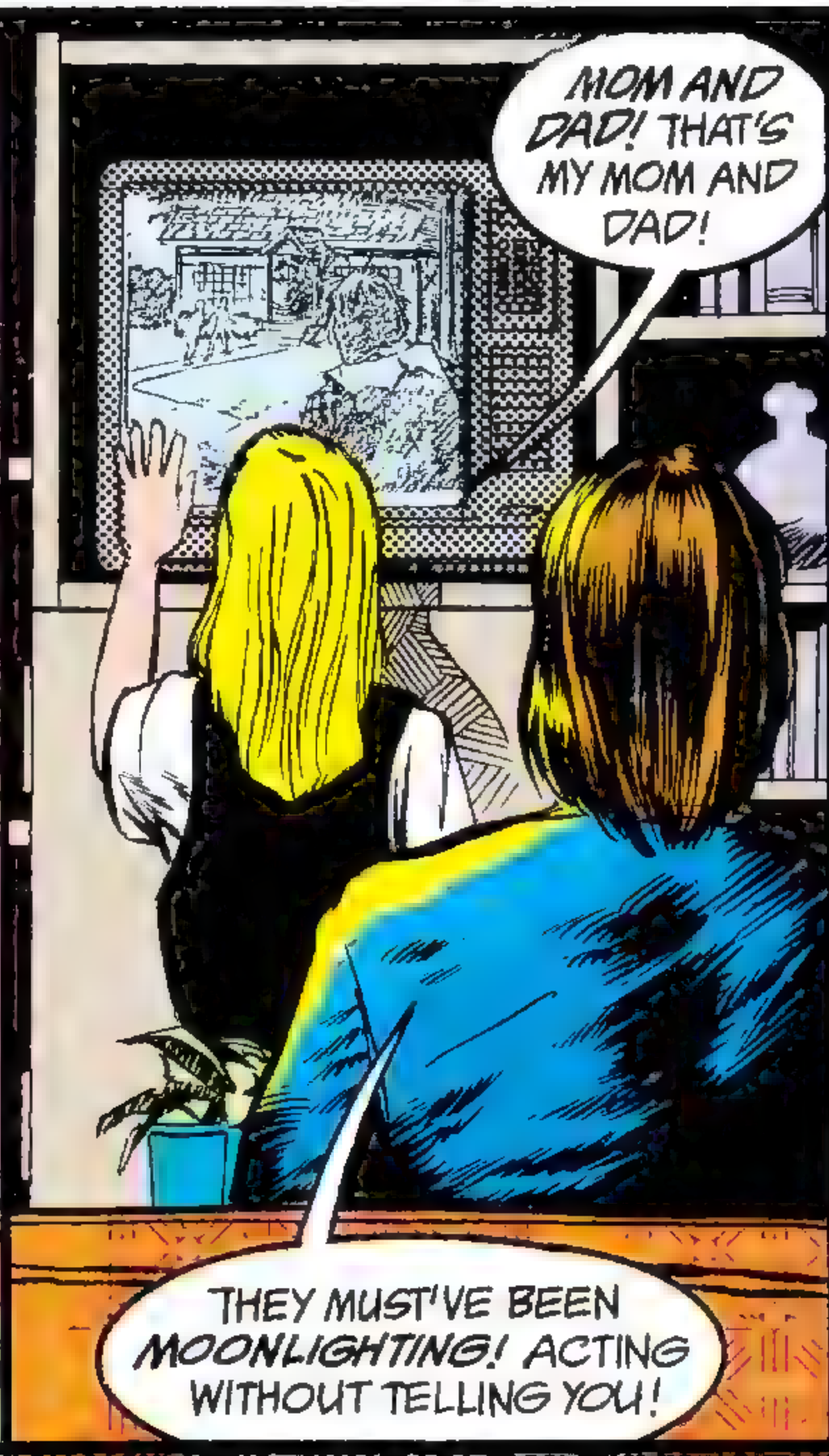




YOU KNOW I DON'T LIKE
HORROR MOVIES. THEY...

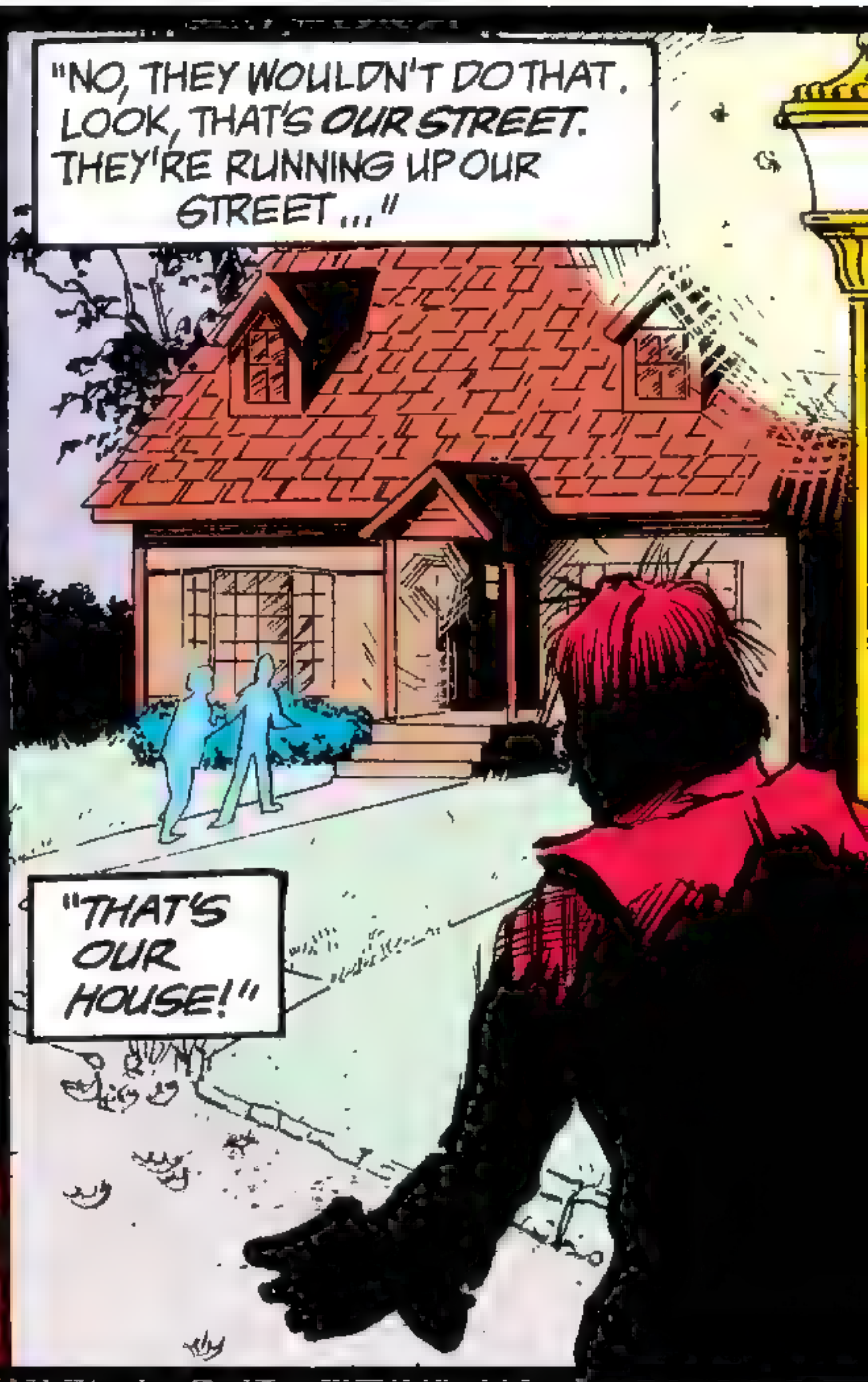
...I DON'T
BELIEVE
IT!

WHAT
DON'T YOU
BELIEVE?



MOM AND
DAD! THAT'S
MY MOM AND
DAD!

THEY MUST'VE BEEN
MOONLIGHTING! ACTING
WITHOUT TELLING YOU!



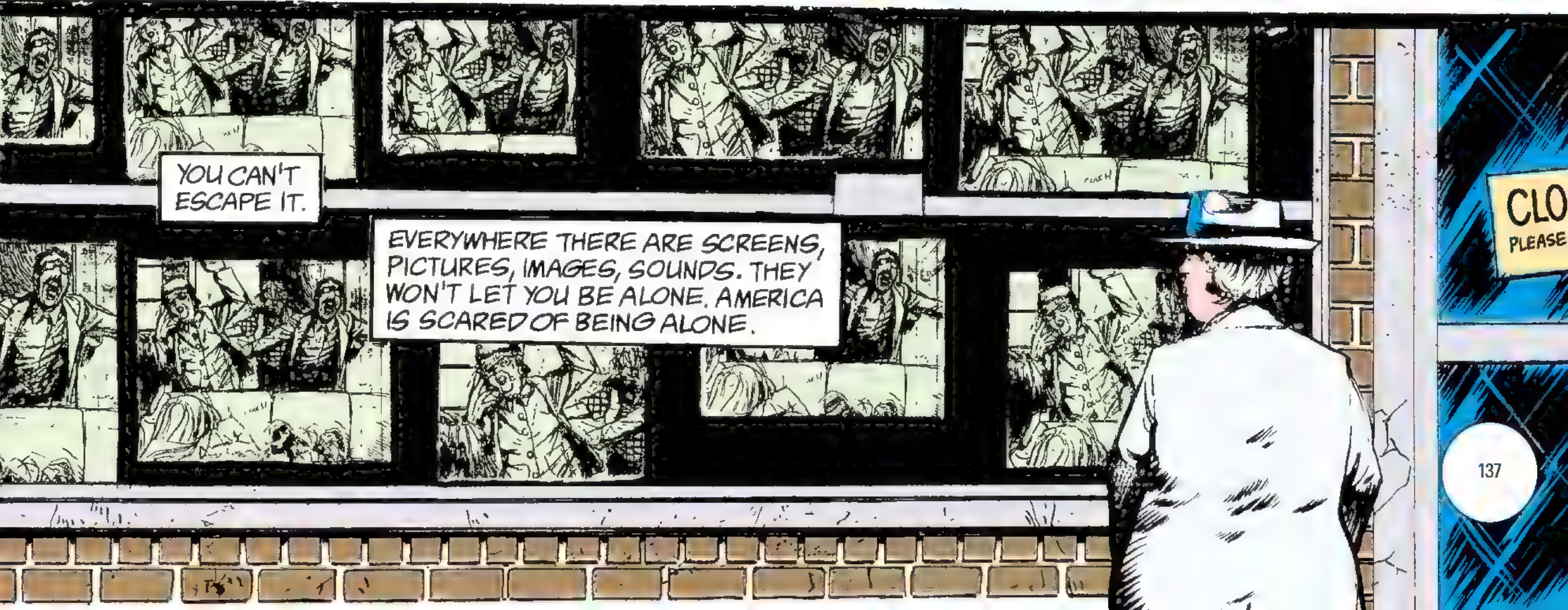
"NO, THEY WOULDN'T DO THAT.
LOOK, THAT'S OUR STREET.
THEY'RE RUNNING UP OUR
STREET..."

"THAT'S
OUR
HOUSE!"



THE MONSTER'S GOING TO
GET THEM! RUN! RUN,
MOM, RUN!

WHAT'RE YOU
TALKING ABOUT? IT'S
ONLY ON TEE VEE!



YOU CAN'T
ESCAPE IT.

EVERYWHERE THERE ARE SCREENS,
PICTURES, IMAGES, SOUNDS. THEY
WON'T LET YOU BE ALONE. AMERICA
IS SCARED OF BEING ALONE.

CLO
PLEASE



WHAT ARE YOU
LOOKING FOR? IT'S
NOT SAFE AROUND
HERE AT NIGHT.

CAN'T YOU FEEL THE
TINGLE IN THE AIR?

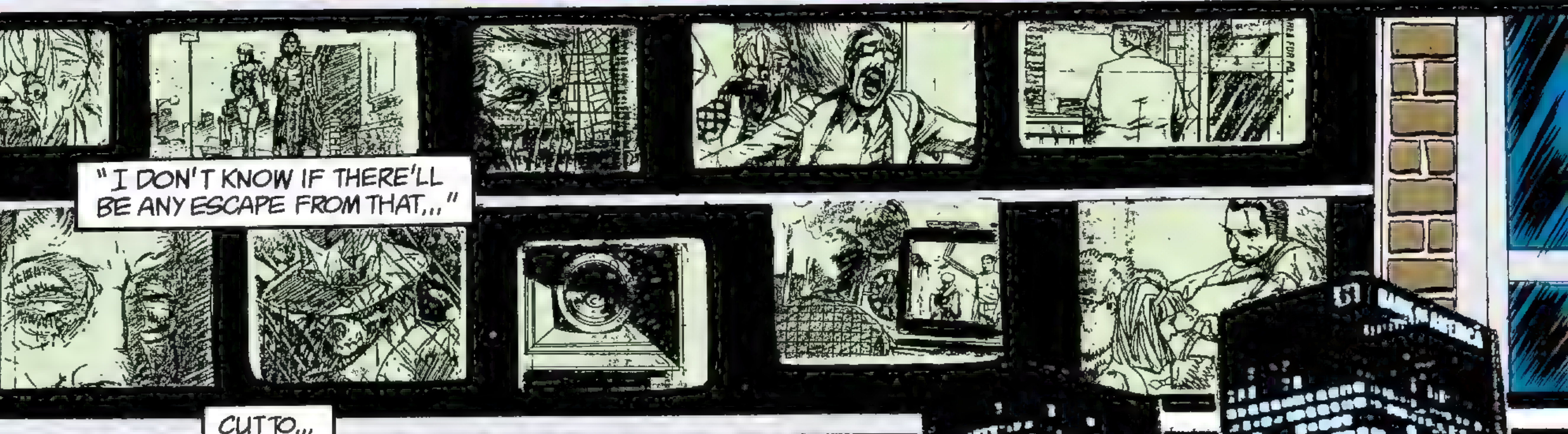
THIS IS THE
SUBTLEST MANIFESTATION
OF THE MADNESS WE'VE
COME ACROSS. IF WE'RE
NOT CAREFUL WE
COULD GET LITTERLY
LOST.



YOU MEAN WE'RE NOT
ALREADY? I WANT A
DRINK.

LATER. THIS IS *EXQUISITELY*
WEIRD, KATHY. I THINK WE'RE ALL
IN EACH OTHER'S *FILMS*.

OR AT LEAST, UNLESS
I CAN FIND OUT WHO'S
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE
MADNESS, WE ALL SOON
WILL BE...



"I DON'T KNOW IF THERE'LL
BE ANY ESCAPE FROM THAT..."

CUTTO...



EXTREME LONG SHOT.
HOLLYWOOD. NIGHT.

FLICKERING LIGHTS, HORIZON
LIKE THE GNARLED SPINE OF A
MONSTER STIRRING FROM
SLEEP, MOANING, SPOILED,
BARBARIC, INFANTILE...

A CACOPHONY OF BABBLING VOICES
REACHING A DEAFENING CLIMACTIC
EXPLOSION OF SOUND...

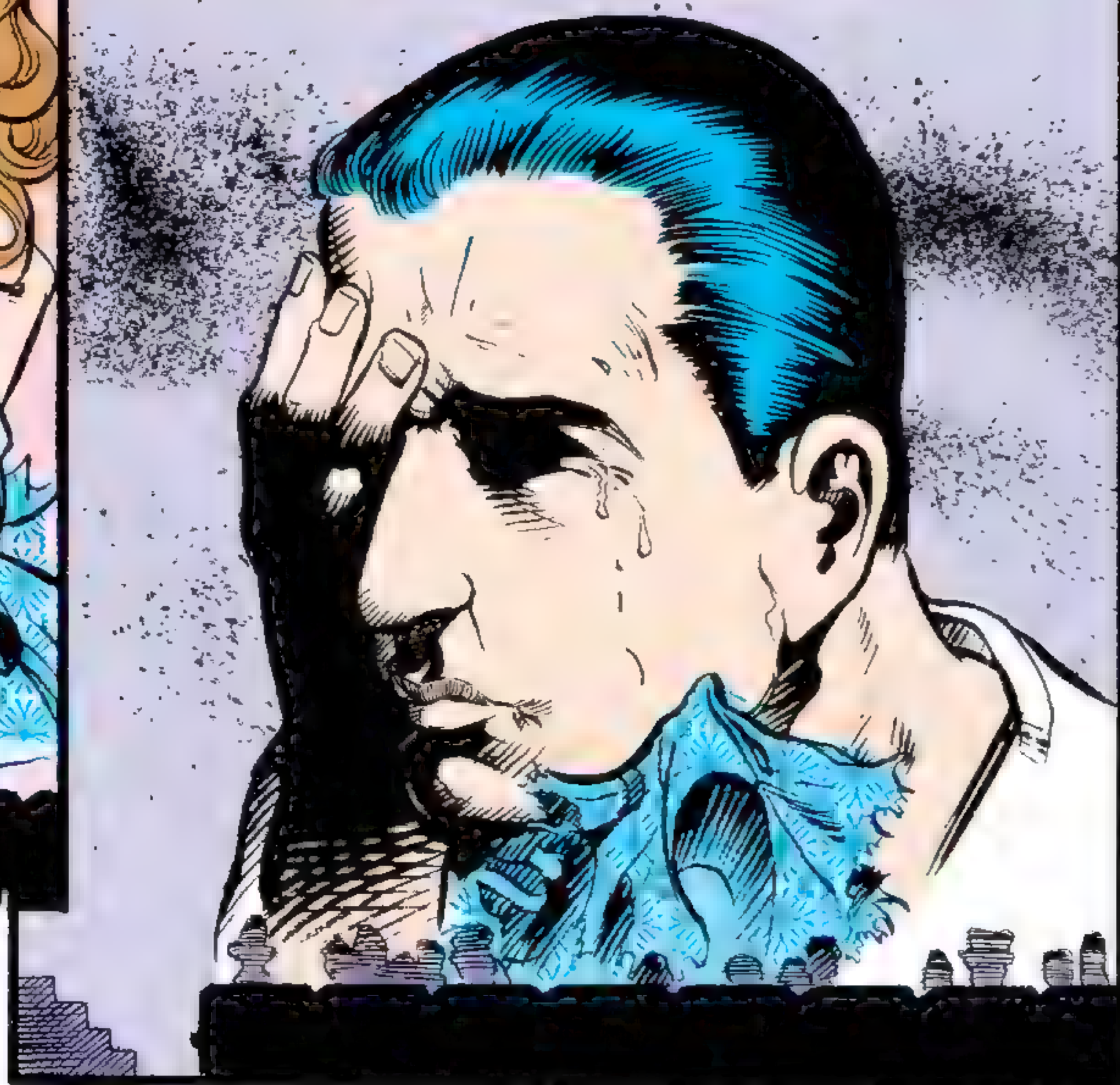


CUT TO MEDIUM SHOT, A CINEMA SCREEN. THE FOUR STARS OF **HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS** CELLULOIDALLY CRUCIFIED...

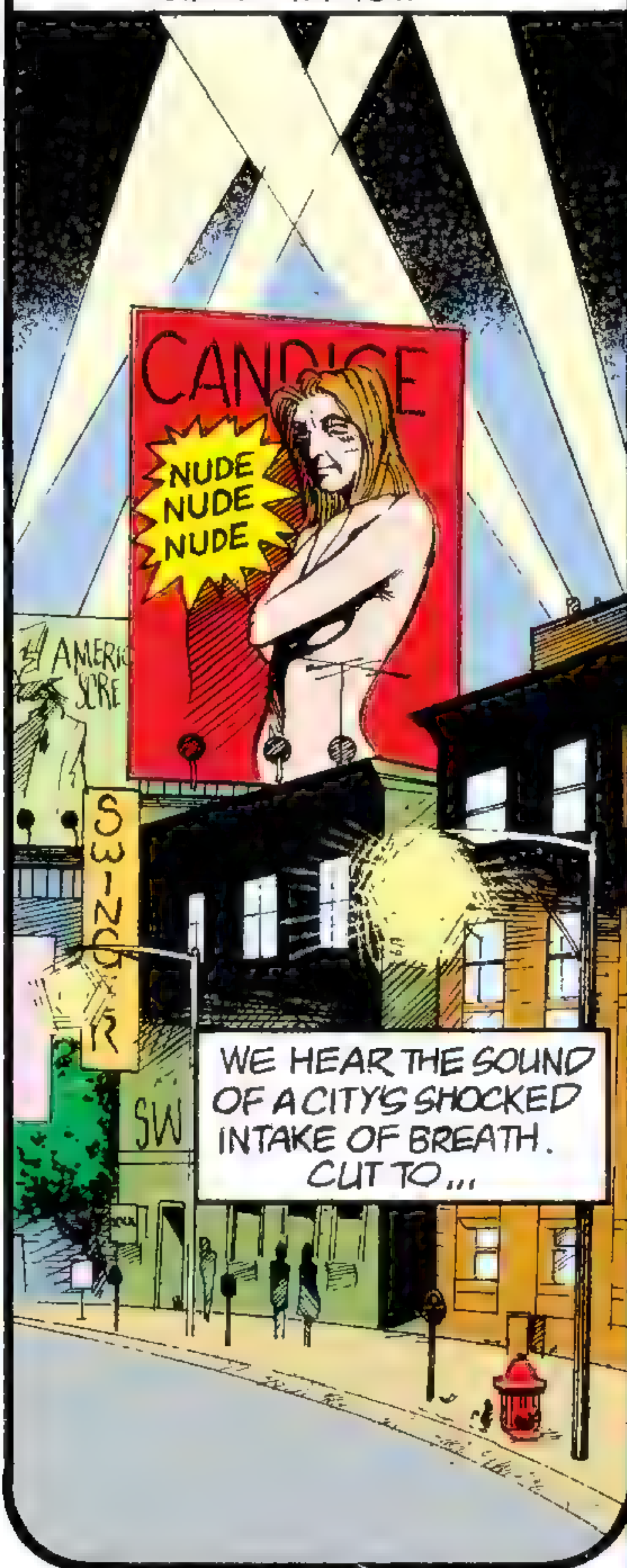
FIRST **GUY FABLE**, HITTING THE LITTLE GIRL TO STOP HER **SCREAMING**...

CLOSE UP AS HE REALIZES HE'S HIT HER **TOO HARD**, A SCRAP OF HER POOR DRESS IN HIS TREMBLING FINGERS...

...TEARS OF DISGUST AND FEAR IN HIS EYES...



CUT TO **CANDICE FLOWERS**, HER SURGERY AND PORNOGRAPHY BEAMED CITY WIDE, ON WALLS, ON TV'S, IN NEON SIGNS ABOVE LAUNDROMATS...



WE HEAR THE SOUND OF A CITY'S SHOCKED INTAKE OF BREATH. CUT TO...

EXT. A FASHIONABLE RESTAURANT IN **BEL AIRE**...

A STONED **KENT HARTON** ROMPS WITH A SPANISH CATAMITE BEFORE AN AGHAST PHALANX OF THE **IN SET**...



DISSOLVE TO...

CLOSE-UP **NAN POTTS**, NOW **EMERALD DARLING**, SLASHING HER WRISTS IN A SHABBY BEDROOM. SOILED SHEETS, GREASY WALLPAPER...

A PHOTO OF THE BABY SHE GAVE AWAY TO PURSUE HER CAREER. JUST ANOTHER CLUMSY CRY FOR HELP.

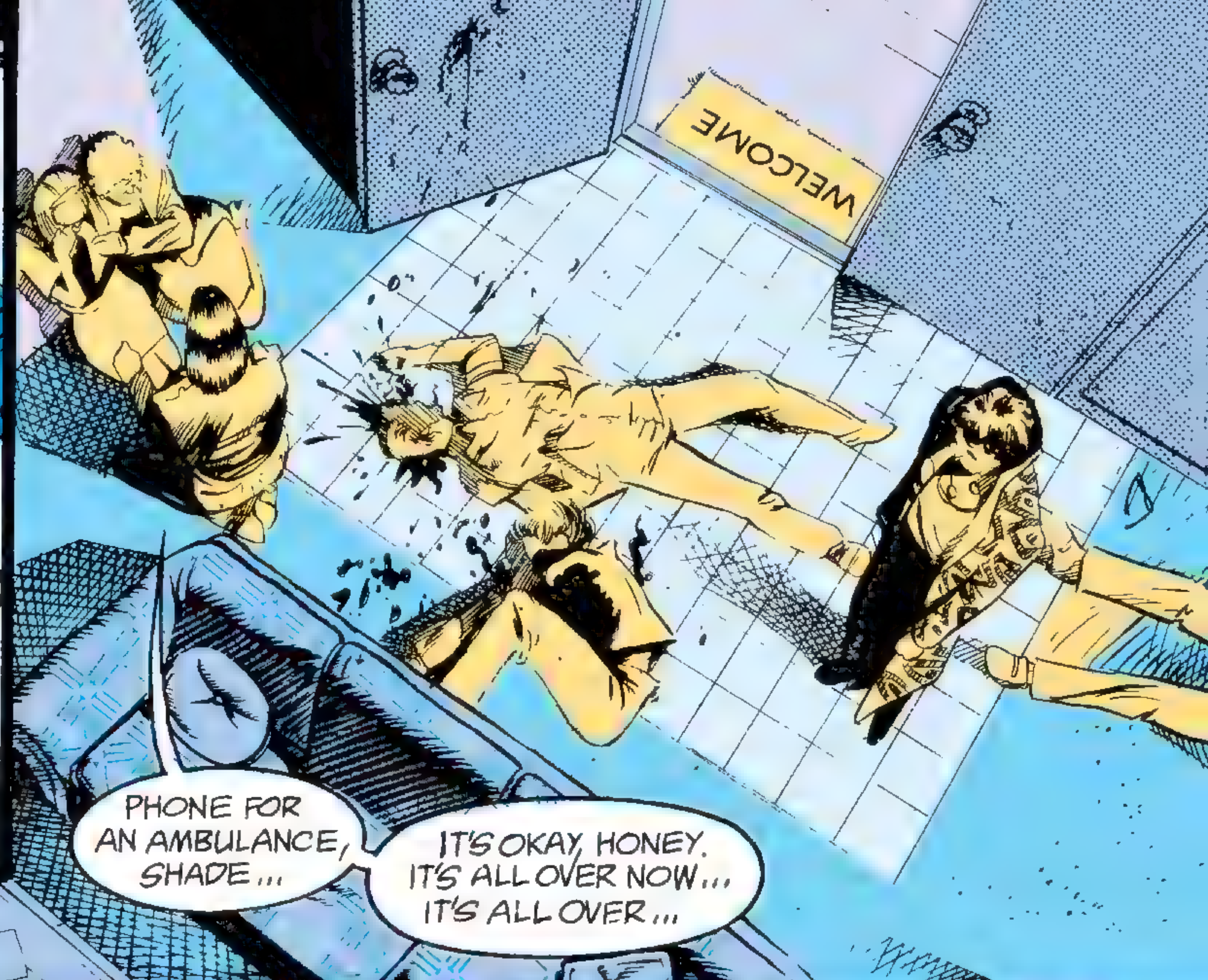






IS HE DEAD? DID I GET IT?

LOOKS LIKE IT. NECK'S BROKEN. NO FACE LEFT.



PHONE FOR AN AMBULANCE, SHADE ...

IT'S OKAY, HONEY. IT'S ALL OVER NOW ... IT'S ALL OVER ...



SO IS THAT IT? WE'VE WON? YOU'VE BEATEN THE MADNESS?

IF HE HAD THE MADNESS, IF HE WAS CREATING IT ALL, I GUESS I HAVE...



HE WAS THE DIRECTOR WE SAW ON TV. KILLED BY THE FILM HE WAS MAKING...

A DIRECTOR. THAT FIGURES, DIRECTING THE MADNESS.



I COULD MURDER A DRINK, SHADE D'YOU THINK MAYBE YOU COULD CONJURE UP SOME OF THAT MONEY?

DON'T SEE WHY NOT NICE RELAX AFTER GOING TO THE MOVIES...



HUH?



SEEMS THAT WAS
JUST A TRAILER,
SHADE...

THE MAIN
PERFORMANCE IS
JUST BEGINNING...

NEXT

HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS II



M E C C A R T H Y I S M

HOLLYWOOD BABBLEON II

PETER MILLIGAN, Writer
CHRIS BACHALO, Penciller
MARK PENNINGTON, Inker
DANIEL VOZZO, Colorist
TODD KLEIN, Letterer
TOM PEYER, Asst. Editor
KAREN BERGER, Editor
STEVE DITKO, Creator

WHAT A SCREAM. IT'S JUST LIKE A BUSBY BERKELEY MOVIE.

HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT STUFF?

CLOSE UP, THE CAMERA.

LENS GLINTING LIKE THE MONOCLED EYE OF GEORGE SANDERS.
DISSOLVE TO...

FROM THE DEEP CULTURE TANK ON META. THERE WAS A SECTION ON HOLLYWOOD.

SEEMS IT WASN'T THE DIRECTOR WHO WAS MAD...

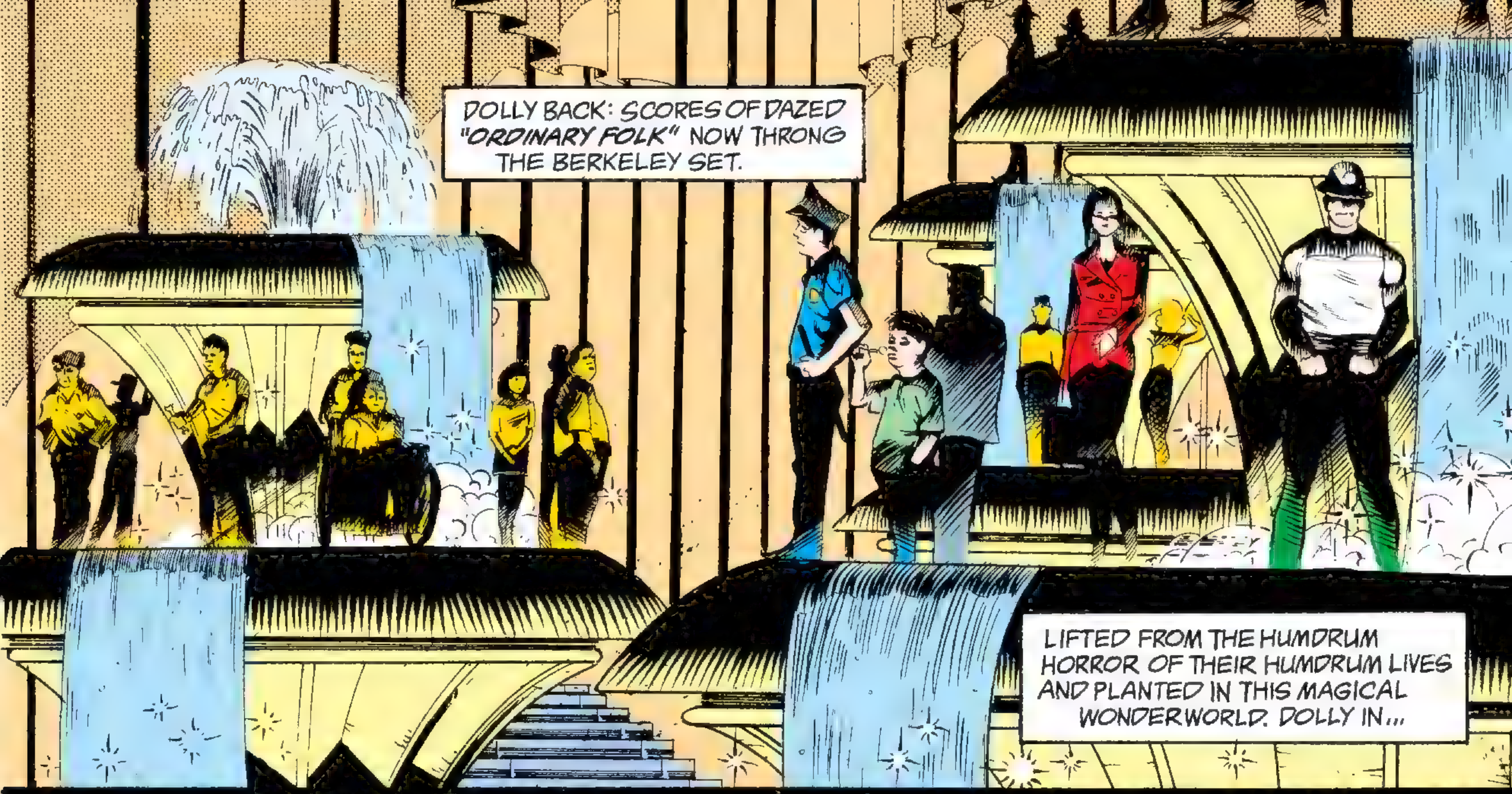
LISTEN, IF I DON'T GET A DRINK DOWN ME SOON, I'M GONNA GO MAD MYSELF.

WHO THE HELL IS DOING ALL THIS, THEN?

CUT TO...

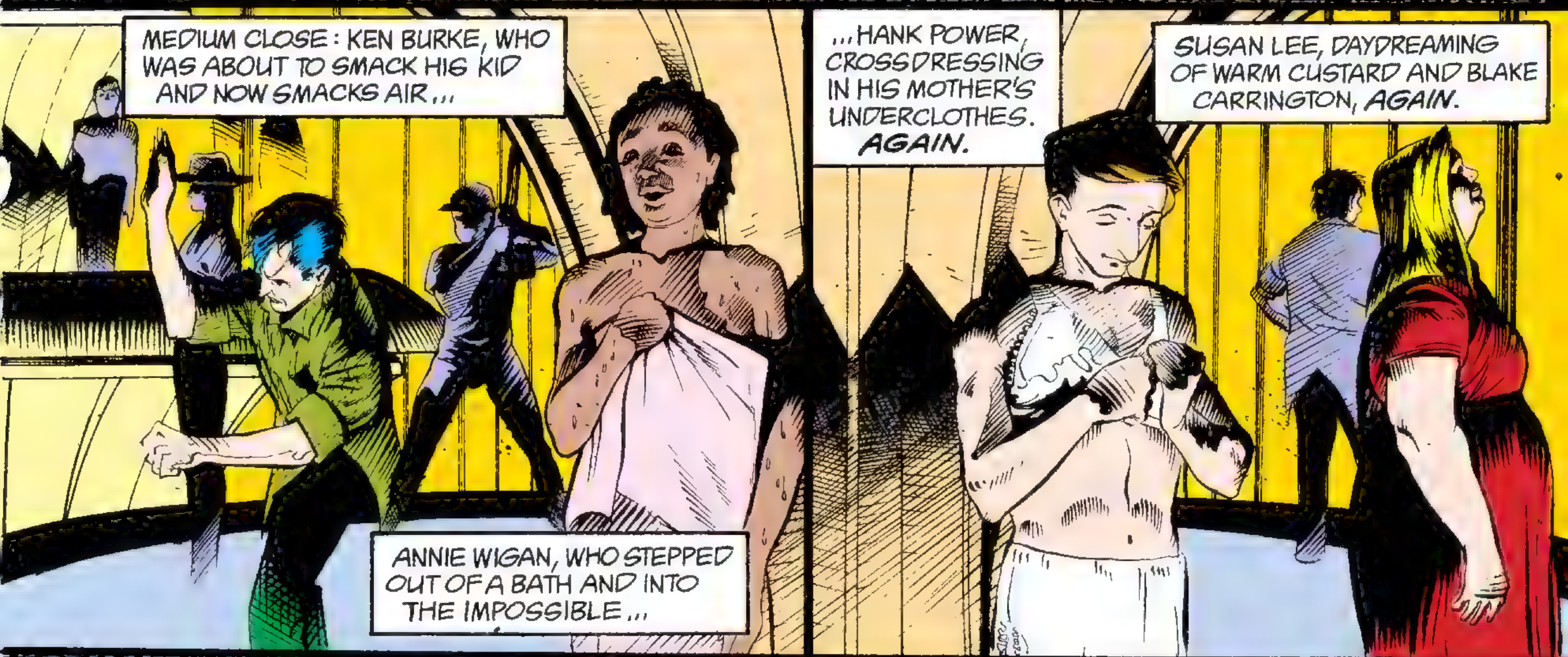
A "REAL" HOUSEWIFE, PLUCKED FROM HER BATHROOM AS SHE WAS WAXING HER MOUSTACHE...

STARTLED TO FIND HERSELF SUDDENLY ON THE SET OF A SIMULATED BUSBY BERKELEY SPECTACULAR.



DOLLY BACK: SCORES OF DAZED "ORDINARY FOLK" NOW THROG THE BERKELEY SET.

LIFTED FROM THE HUMDRUM HORROR OF THEIR HUMDRUM LIVES AND PLANTED IN THIS MAGICAL WONDERWORLD. DOLLY IN...

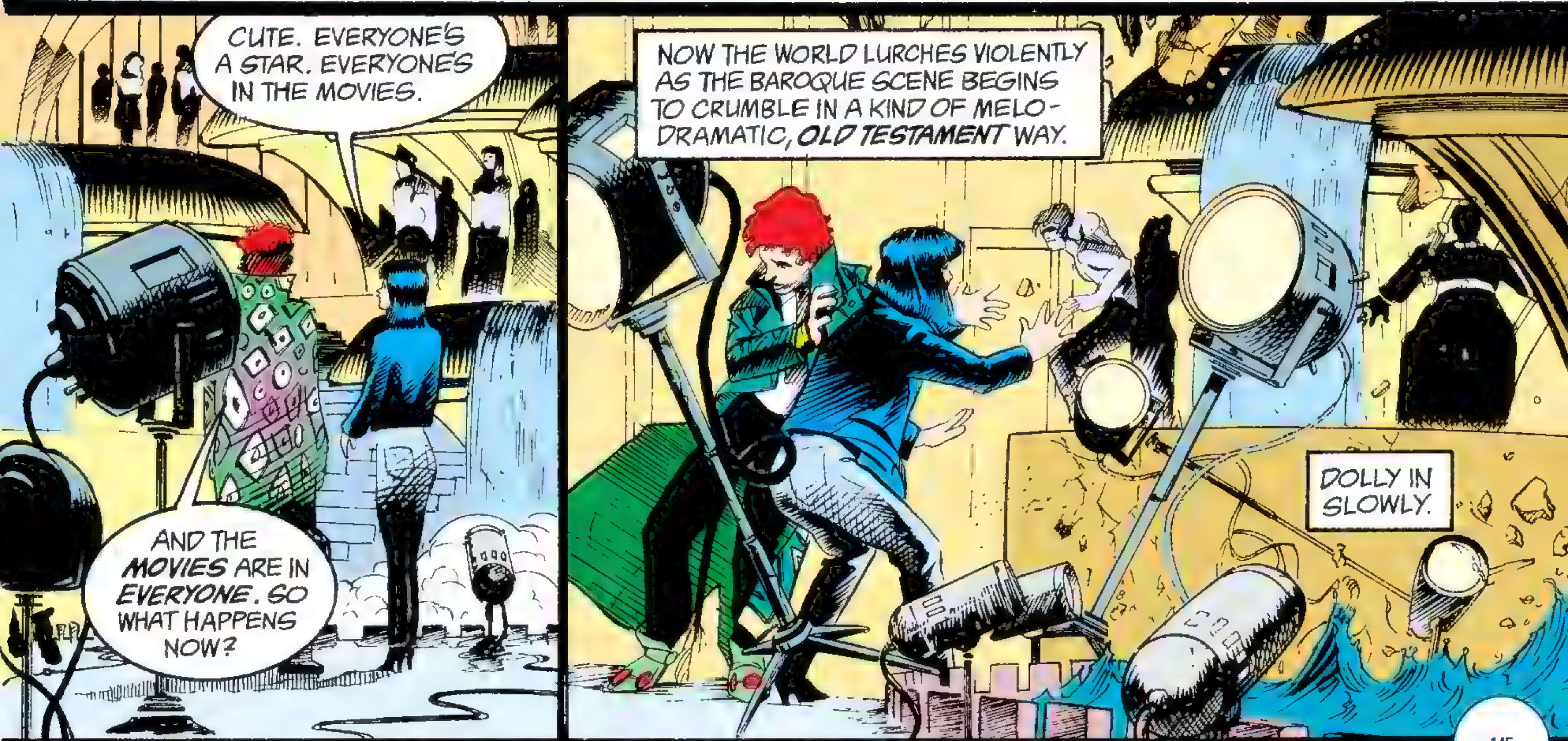


MEDIUM CLOSE: KEN BURKE, WHO WAS ABOUT TO SMACK HIS KID AND NOW SMACKS AIR...

...HANK POWER, CROSSDRESSING IN HIS MOTHER'S UNDERCLOTHES. AGAIN.

SUSAN LEE, DAYDREAMING OF WARM CUSTARD AND BLAKE CARRINGTON, AGAIN.

ANNIE WIGAN, WHO STEPPED OUT OF A BATH AND INTO THE IMPOSSIBLE...

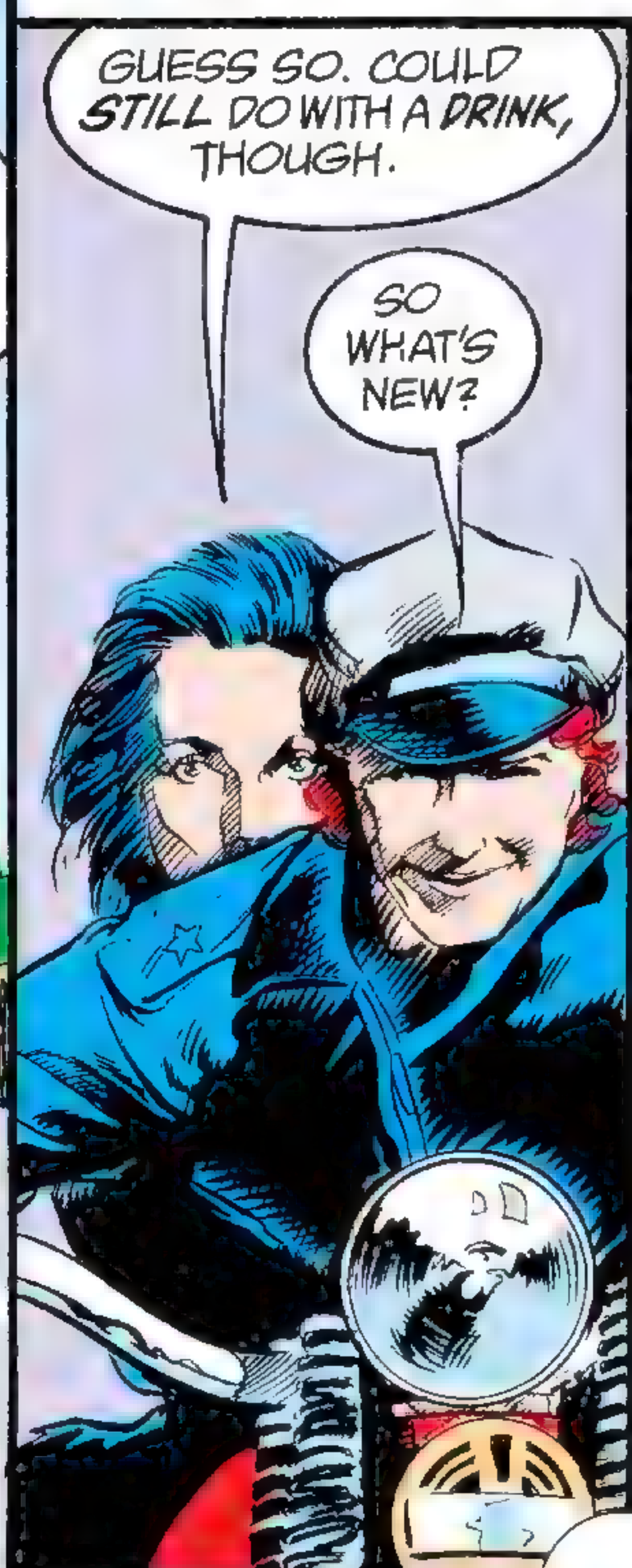
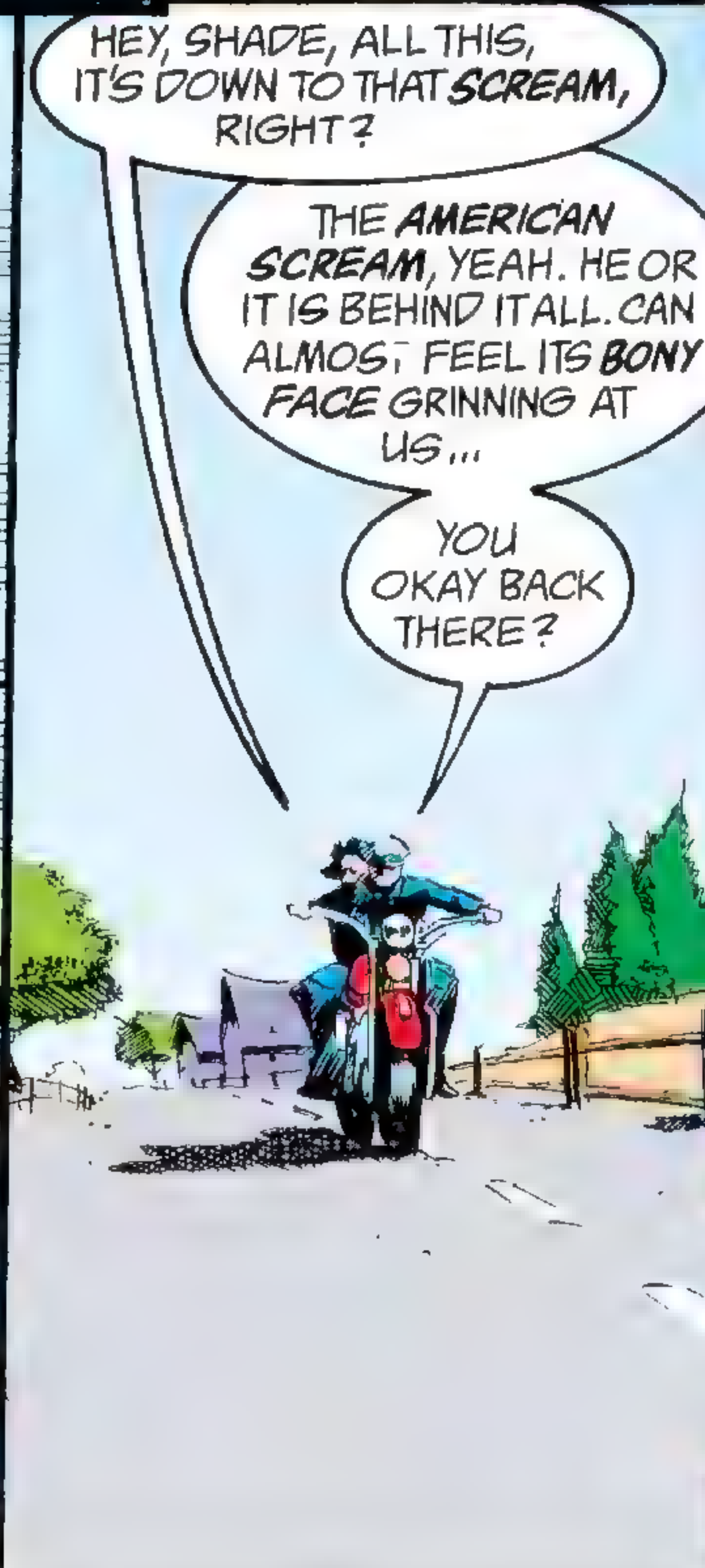
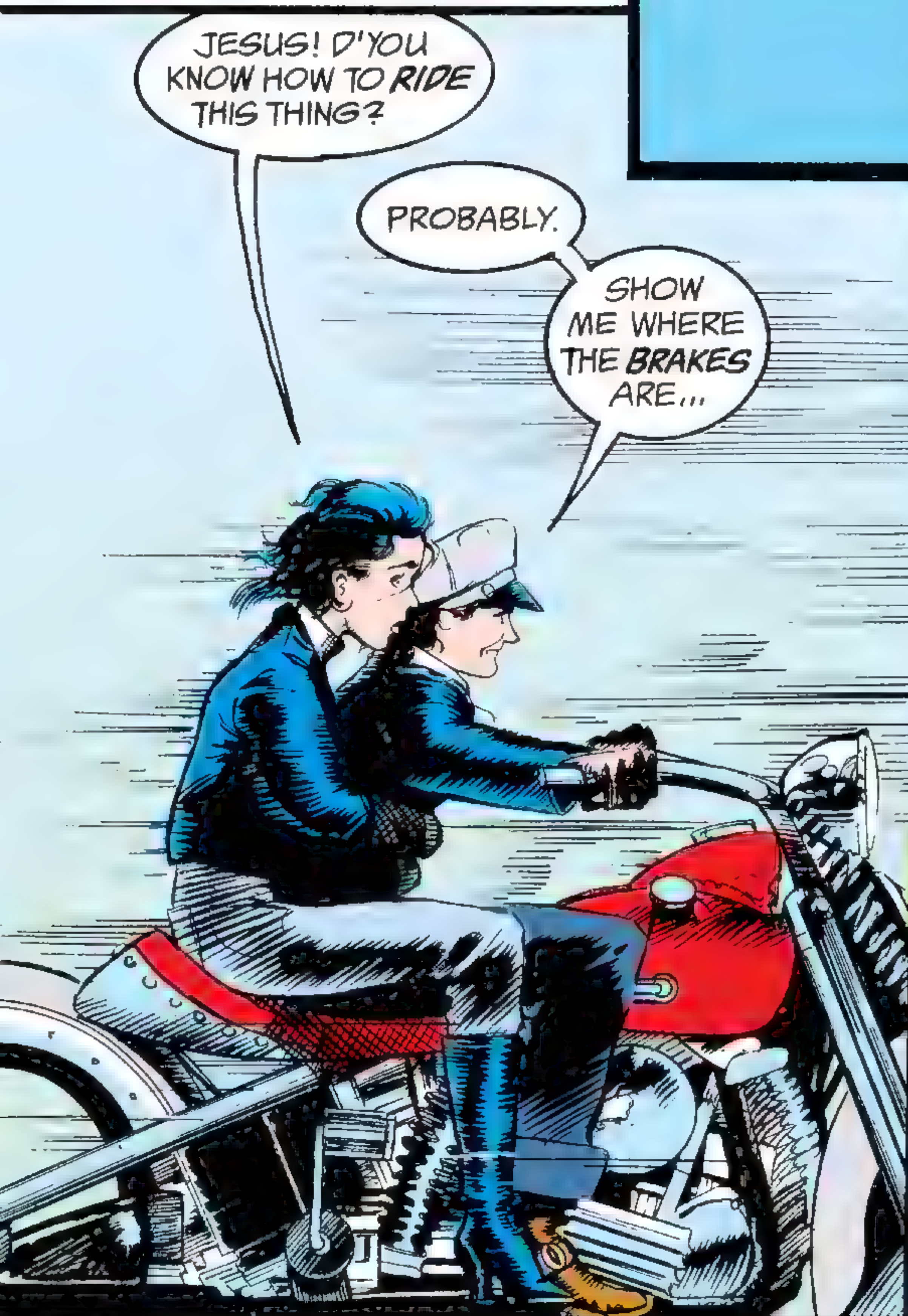
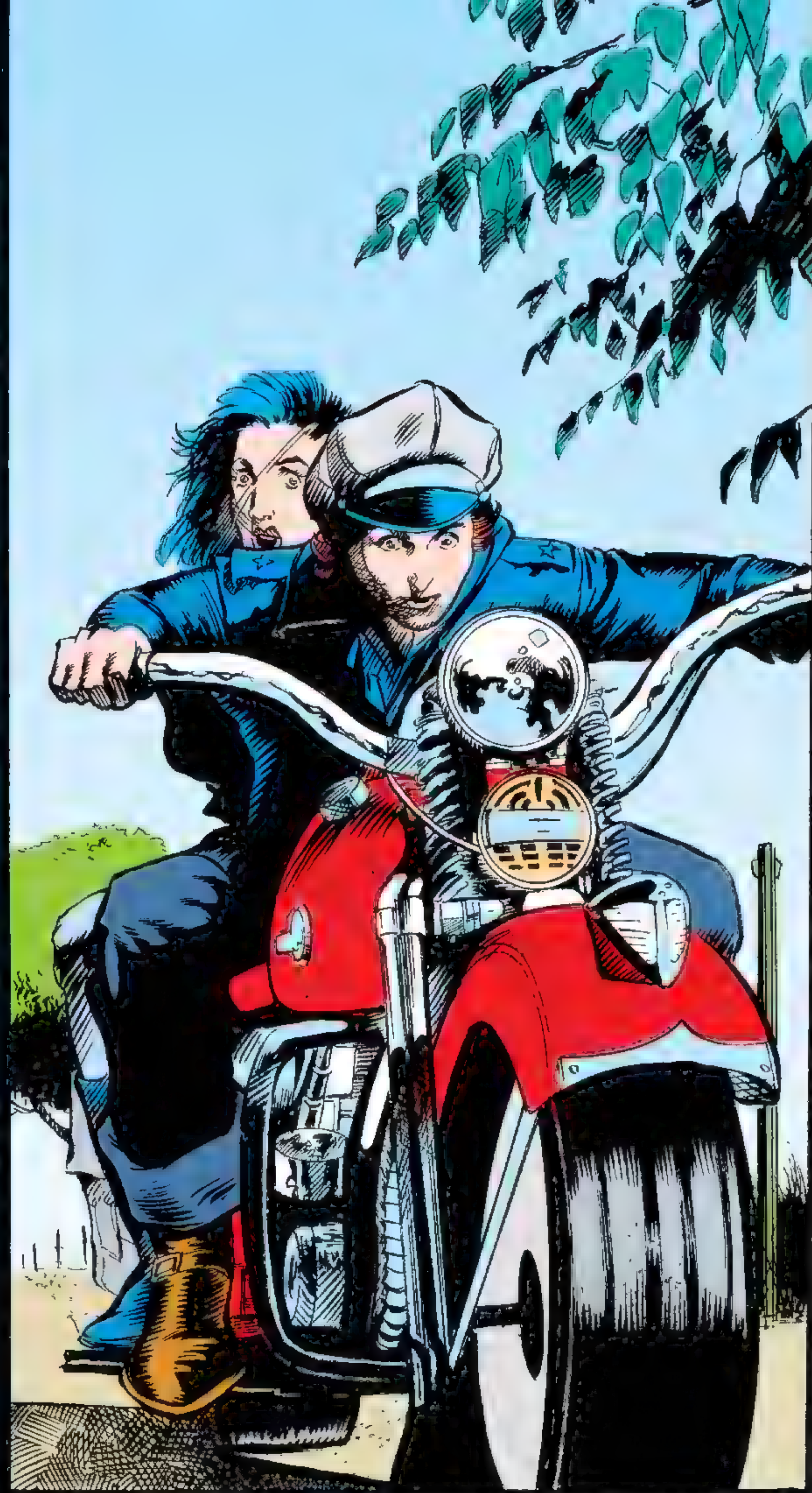
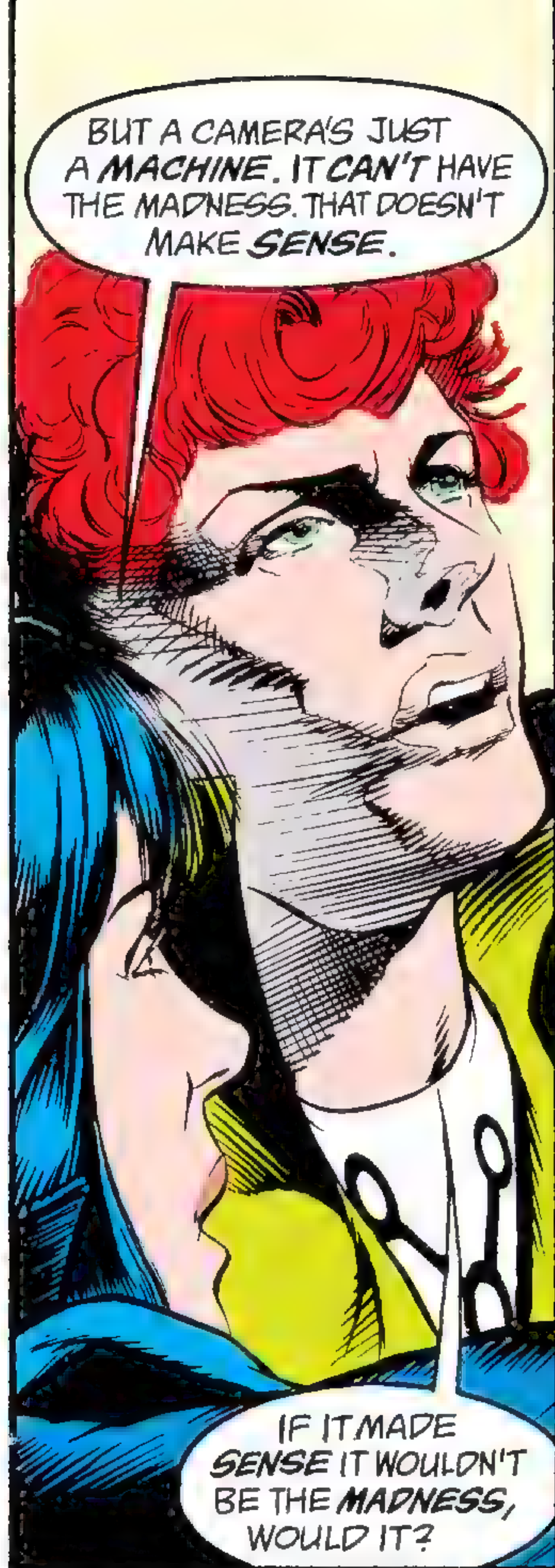


CUTE. EVERYONE'S A STAR. EVERYONE'S IN THE MOVIES.

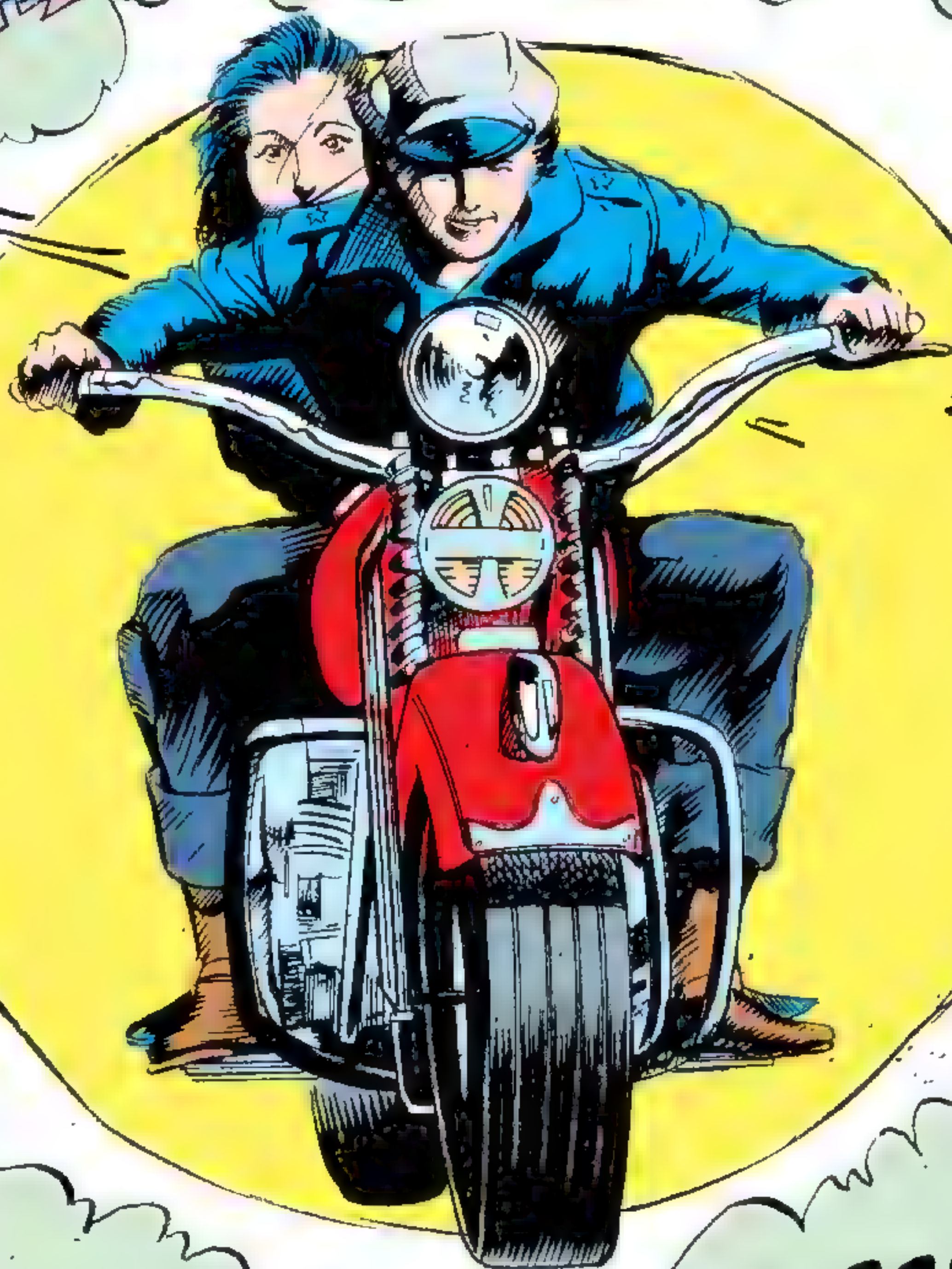
NOW THE WORLD LURCHES VIOLENTLY AS THE BAROQUE SCENE BEGINS TO CRUMBLE IN A KIND OF MELO-DRAMATIC, OLD TESTAMENT WAY.

DOLLY IN SLOWLY.

AND THE MOVIES ARE IN EVERYONE. SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW?



BIKE TRASH!



THE LEATHER-CLAD SCUM
WHO WERE TOO FAST TO LIVE...
BUT TOO TOUGH TO DIE!

TO THE FEATURES
EDITOR, *THE VOICE*.
HAVE BEEN UNAVOIDABLY
DELAYED IN HOLLYWOOD
OWING TO THE TOWN
BEING TAKEN OVER AND
SUCKED INTO MOVIELAND
ITSELF.

YOURS SYNOPTICALLY,
CRISPEN KEEN, FILM
EDITOR.



P.S.: PLEASE GET
FRANK TO WATER
MY PLANTS, ESPECIALLY
THE DRAGONTREE. TA.

HA! KEEN'S OFF
HIS TROLLEY AGAIN,
THEY'D SAY, SILLY
OLD SOD, BUT
NO MATTER.



THE FACT THAT
EVERYTHING IS GOING
QUITE MAD, THAT
MAKE-BELIEVE IS
STORMING REALITY.
CONTROL IS NEITHER
HERE NOR THERE.

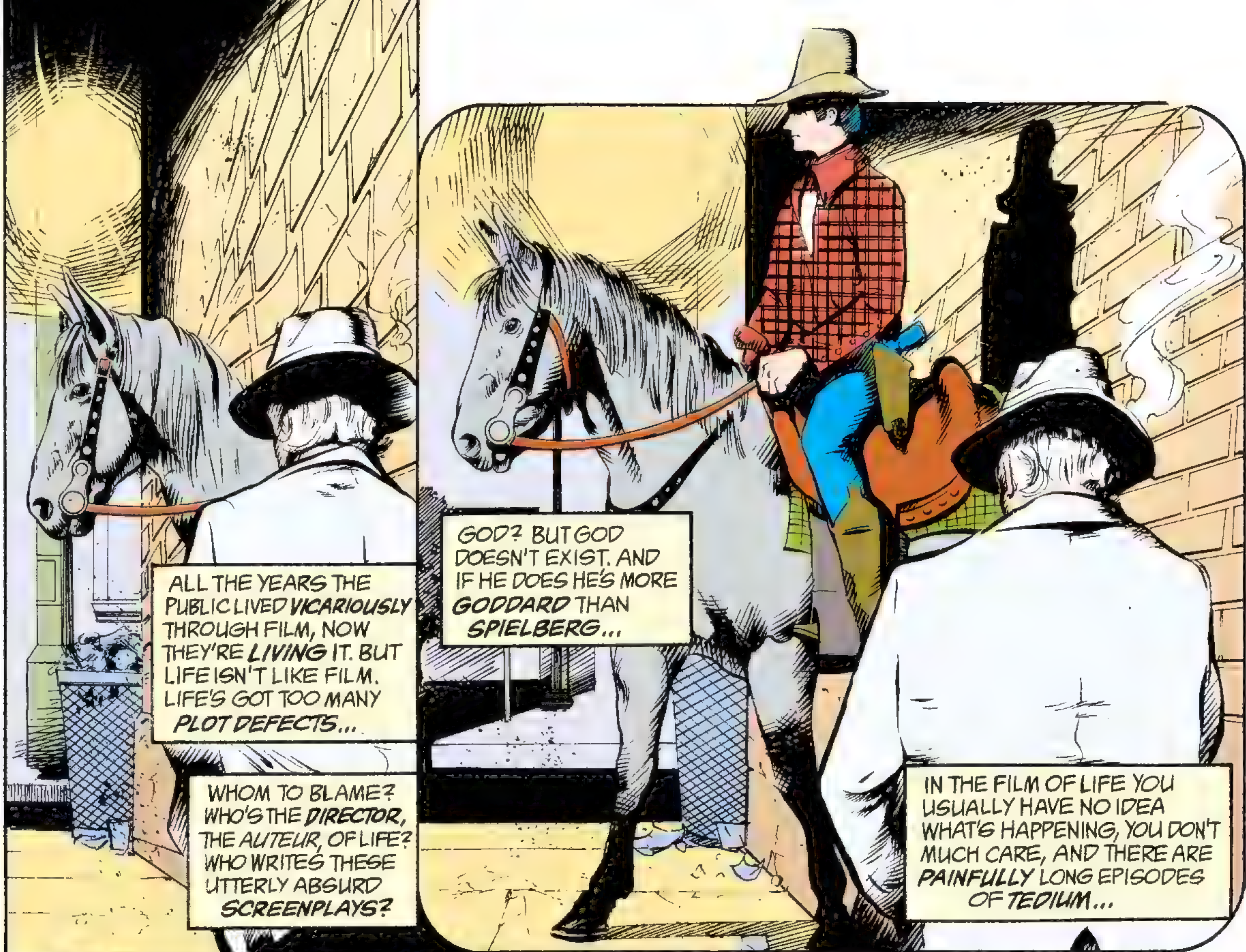
THE MOVIES ARE TAKING
OVER, AS ONE DREADED
THEY WOULD. SOMETHING
UNLIKELY IS EMERGING
FROM THE WALL, BUT NO
MATTER...



I MUST KEEP
A CLEAR HEAD.

IF I'M TO SURVIVE WITH MY MIND
INTACT, I MUST PUT MY QUEER
SHOULDER FIRMLY TO THE
WHEEL OF OBJECTIVITY.





ALL THE YEARS THE PUBLIC LIVED VICARIOUSLY THROUGH FILM, NOW THEY'RE *LIVING* IT. BUT LIFE ISN'T LIKE FILM. LIFE'S GOT TOO MANY *PLOT DEFECTS*...

GOD? BUT GOD DOESN'T EXIST. AND IF HE DOES HE'S MORE *GODDARD* THAN *SPIELBERG*...

WHOM TO BLAME? WHO'S THE *DIRECTOR*, THE *AUTEUR*, OF LIFE? WHO WRITES THESE UTTERLY ABSURD *SCREENPLAYS*?

IN THE FILM OF LIFE YOU USUALLY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S HAPPENING, YOU DON'T MUCH CARE, AND THERE ARE *PAINFULLY LONG EPISODES OF TEDIOUS*...

THERE'S NO *DENOUEMENT* IN REAL LIFE. THERE ARE NO HAPPY ENDINGS. THERE AREN'T EVEN ANY *MCGUFFINS*...

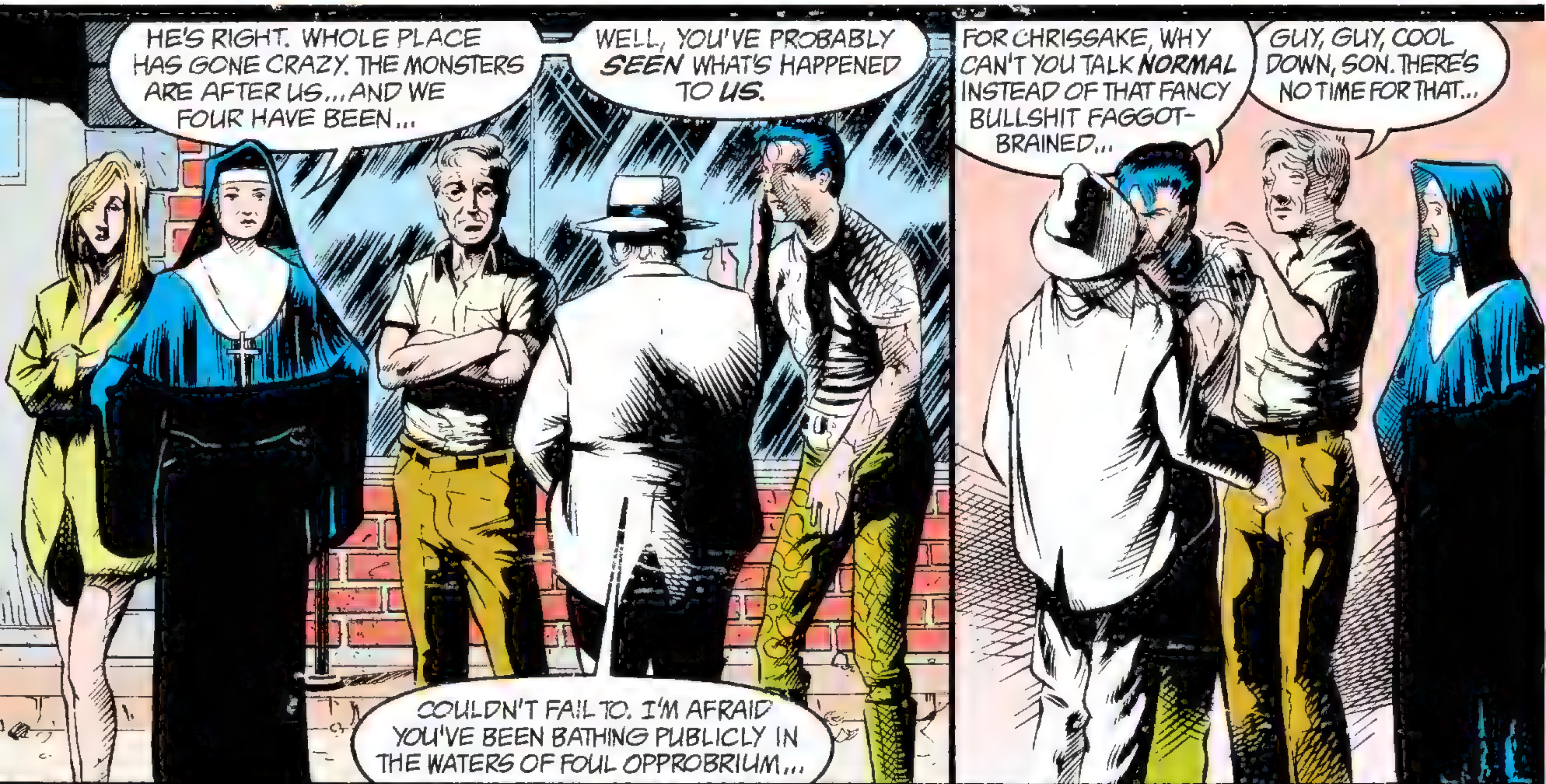
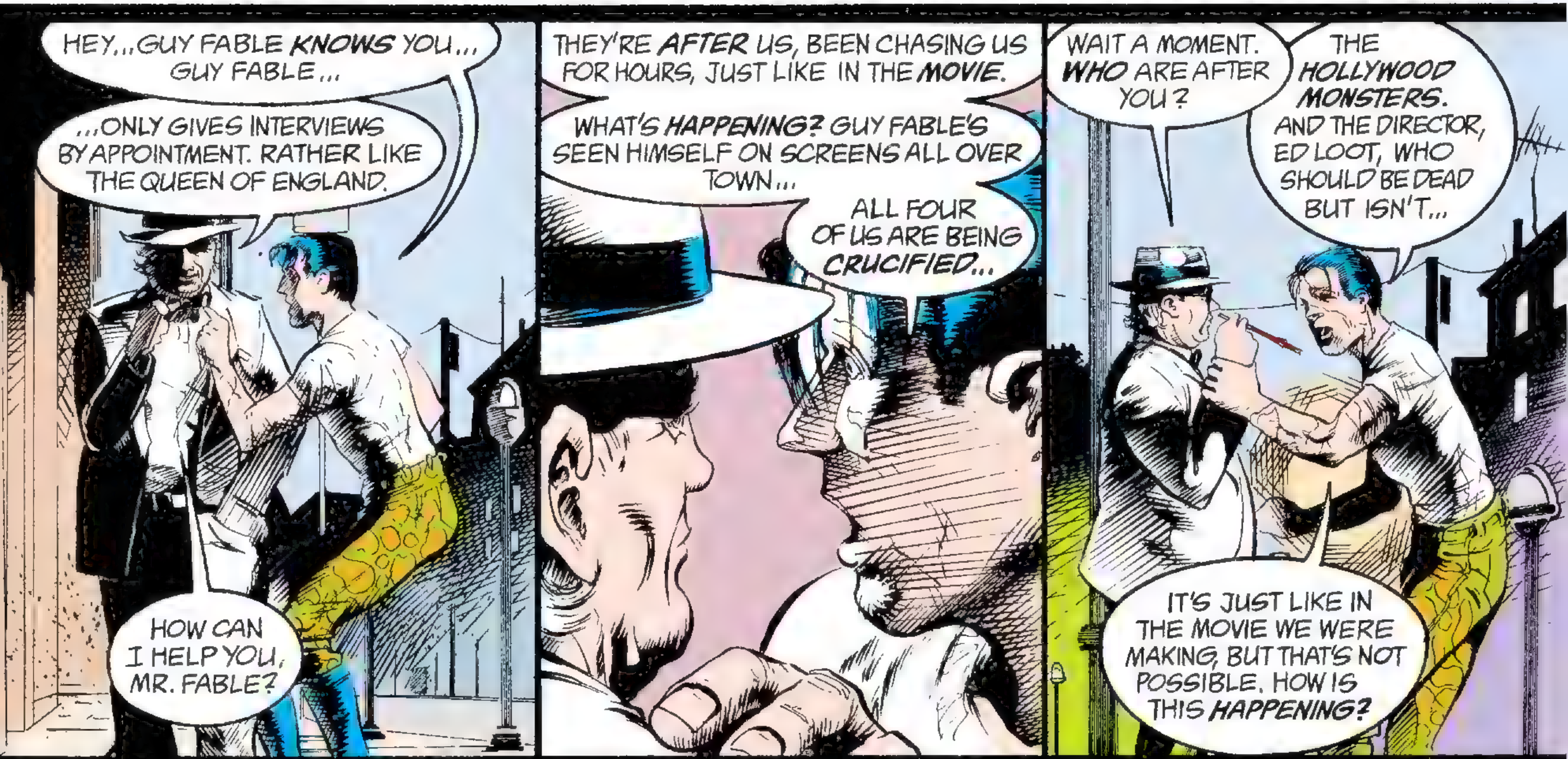
THE *REAL* REALITY OF A PERSON'S LIFE IS AN *INCOHERENT* REALITY...

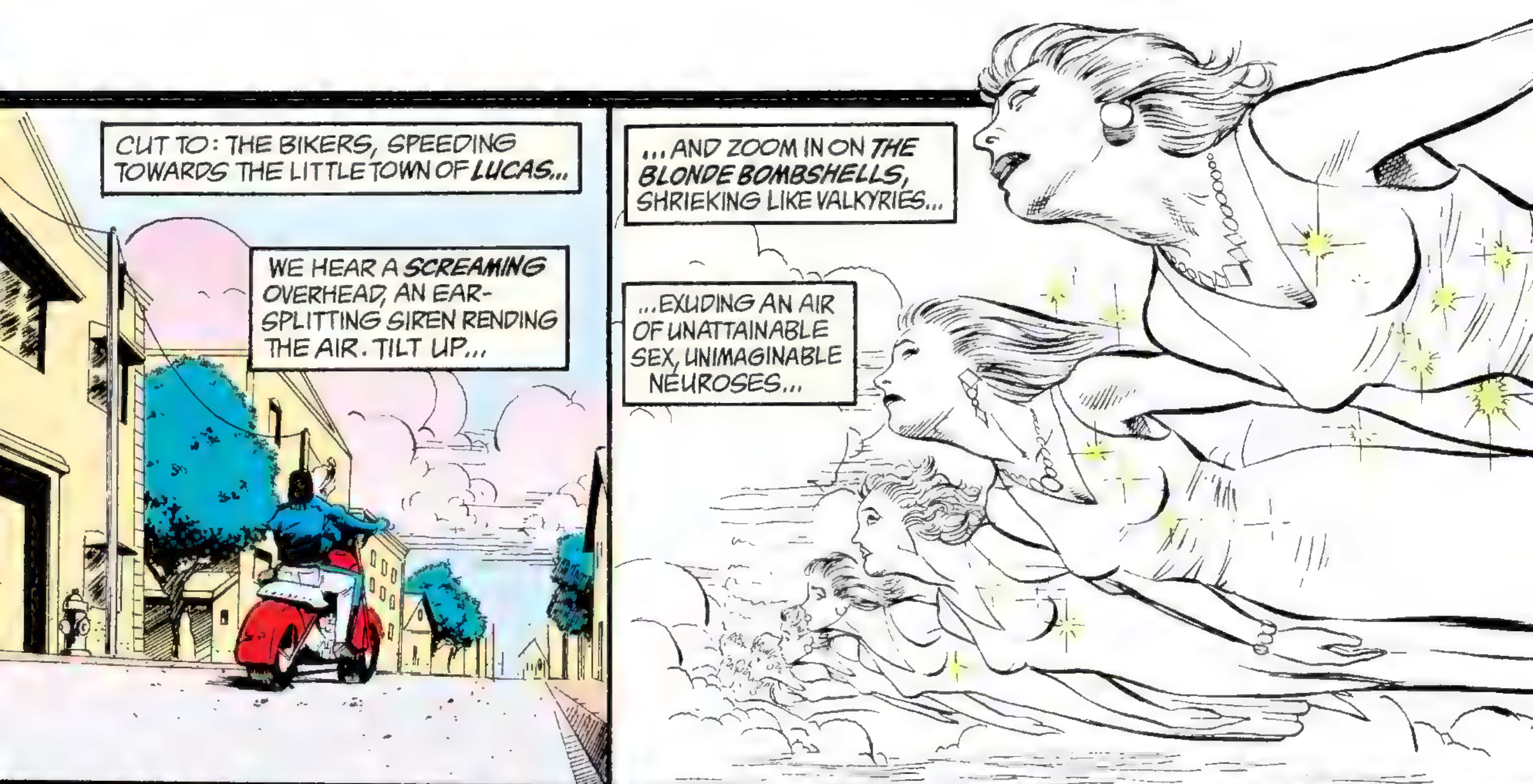
... WITH SCENES AND CHARACTERS PASSING IN AND OUT OF THE STORY WITH *NO MEANING*...

OR WITH A MEANING THAT MAKES *NO SENSE* WHATSOEVER.

H-HELP...

YOU GOTTA HELP ME...



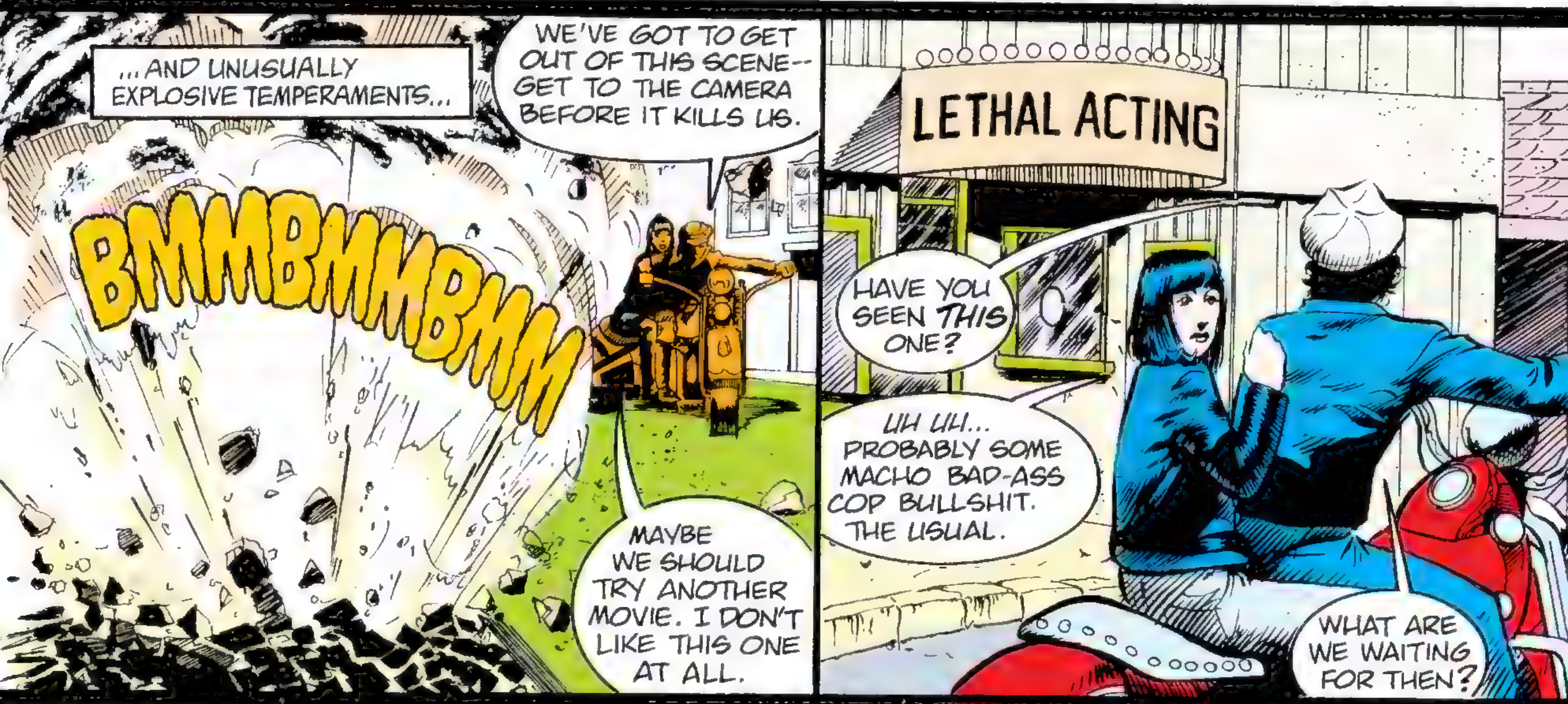


CUT TO: THE BIKERS, SPEEDING TOWARDS THE LITTLE TOWN OF LUCAS...

...AND ZOOM IN ON THE BLONDE BOMBSHELLS, SHRIEKING LIKE VALKYRIES...

WE HEAR A SCREAMING OVERHEAD, AN EAR-SPLITTING SIREN RENDING THE AIR. TILT UP...

...EXUDING AN AIR OF UNATTAINABLE SEX, UNIMAGINABLE NEUROSES...



...AND UNUSUALLY EXPLOSIVE TEMPERAMENTS...

WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF THIS SCENE-- GET TO THE CAMERA BEFORE IT KILLS US.

BMMBMMBMM

LETHAL ACTING

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS ONE?

LIH LIH... PROBABLY SOME MACHO BAD-ASS COP BULLSHIT. THE USUAL.

MAYBE WE SHOULD TRY ANOTHER MOVIE. I DON'T LIKE THIS ONE AT ALL.

WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR THEN?



CUT TO: ROOF TOP. URGENT MUSIC IN AND UP. ELEMENTS OF HITCHCOCK'S *VERTIGO* AS KATHY TEETERS ON THE EDGE OF OBLIVION...

SHADE? WHAT'S HAPPENED? I DON'T LIKE HEIGHTS, SHADE, I...

GET OFF THE EDGE, LADY. JUMPING AIN'T GONNA SOLVE NOTHING.

WHAT AM I SAYING? THOSE WEREN'T MY WORDS...

GET AWAY, KATHY. THE CAMERA'S MAKING YOU DO THIS. JUST...

NO! DON'T COME NEAR ME, YOU CREEP. I'M NO GOOD TO ANYONE. I'M JUST A WASHED-UP HAS-BEEN ALCOHOLIC WITH AN ATTITUDE PROBLEM...

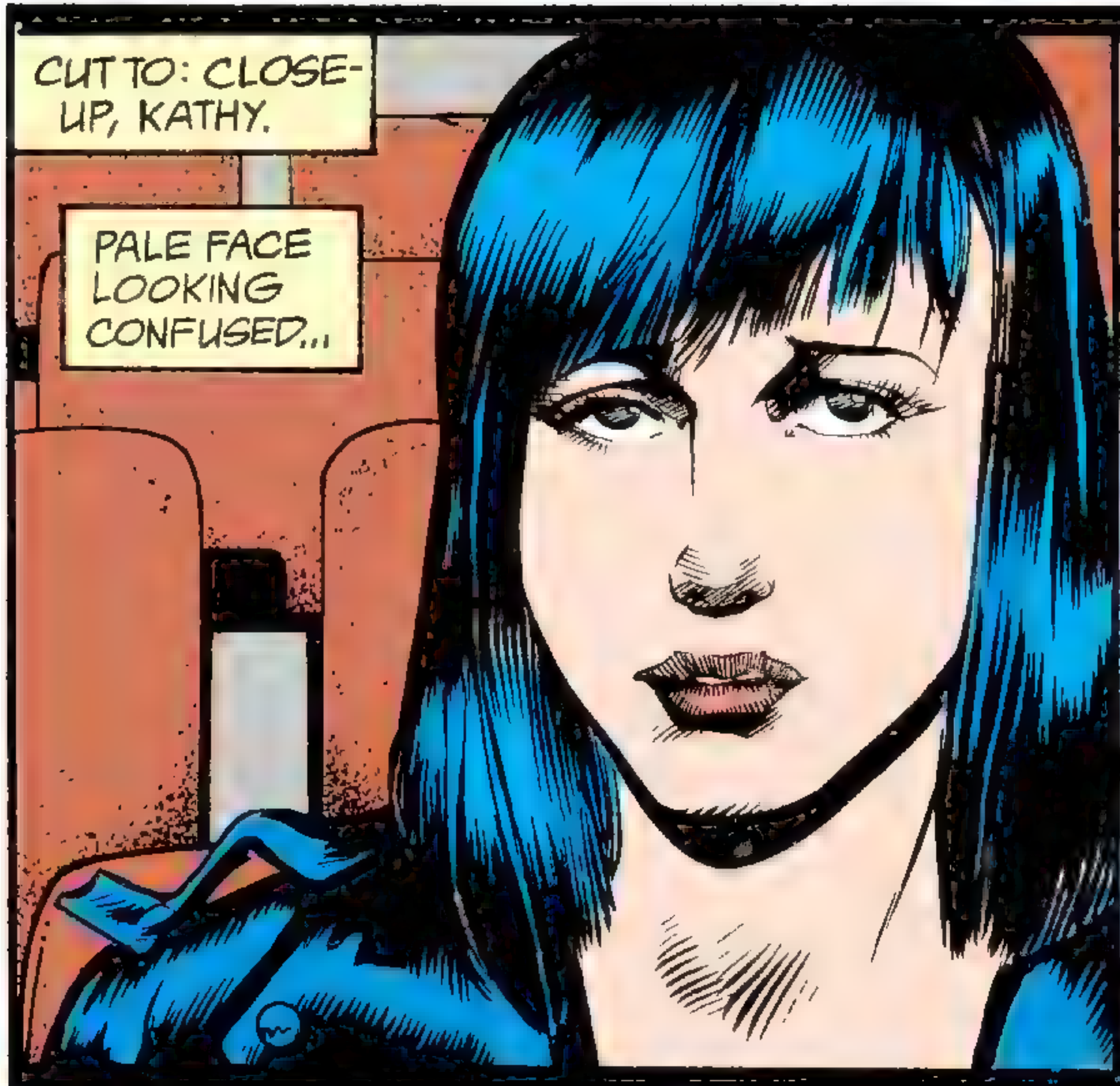
OKAY, LADY, SUIT YOURSELF. JUMP. BUT MAKE IT QUICK. I GOT TICKETS FOR THE BALL GAME TONIGHT.

SHADE, DON'T BE CRAZY! HELP ME! I'M TRYING TO GET AWAY FROM THE EDGE, BUT I CAN'T...

SHADE!

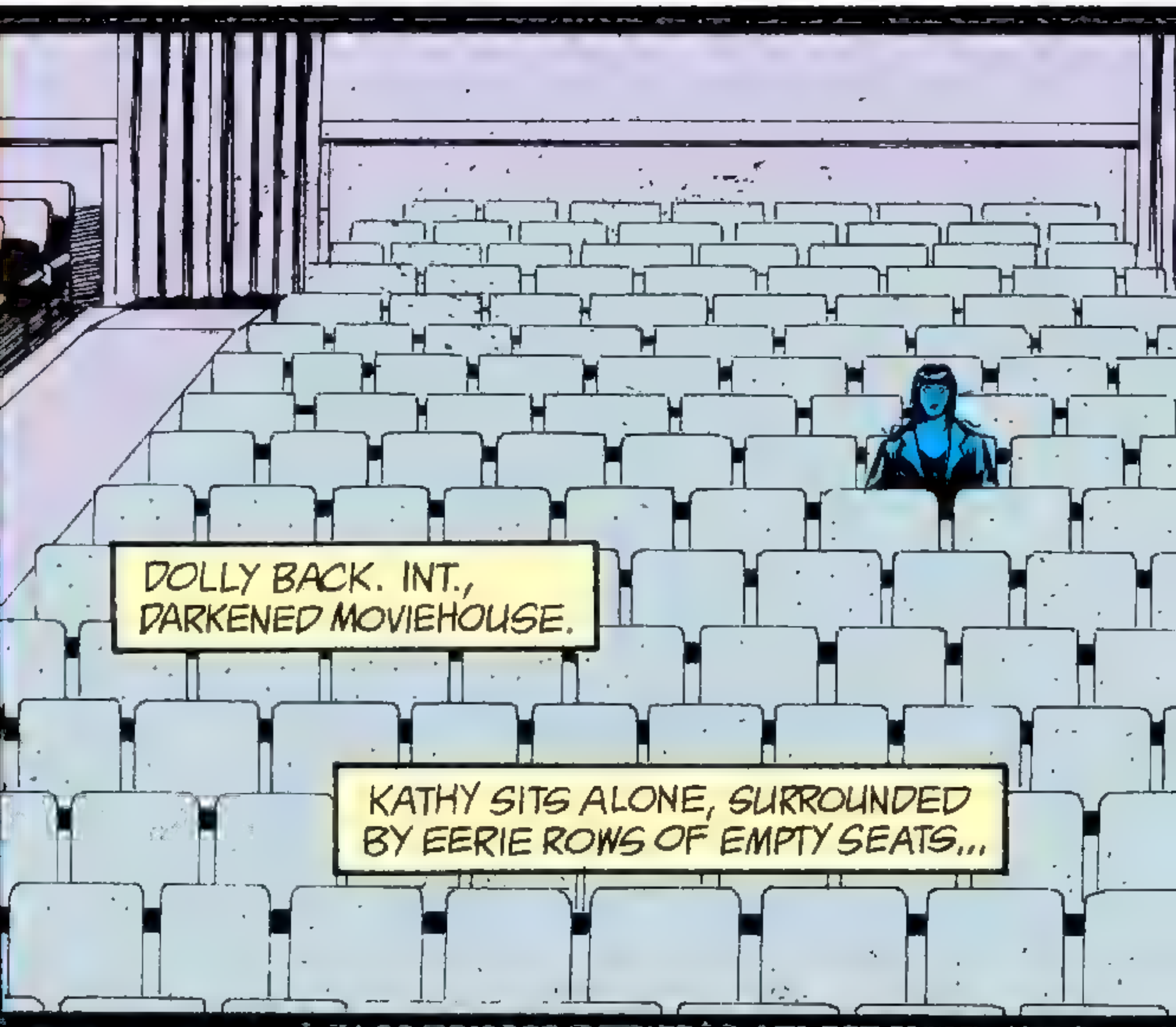
OKAY, CUT. THAT'S A TAKE. WONDERFUL, KATHY...

BUT SHADE, DARLING, I THINK YOU COULD PULL BACK JUST AN EENSY BIT. YOU'RE A BAD-ASS STREET COP, NOT BLOODY HAMLET.



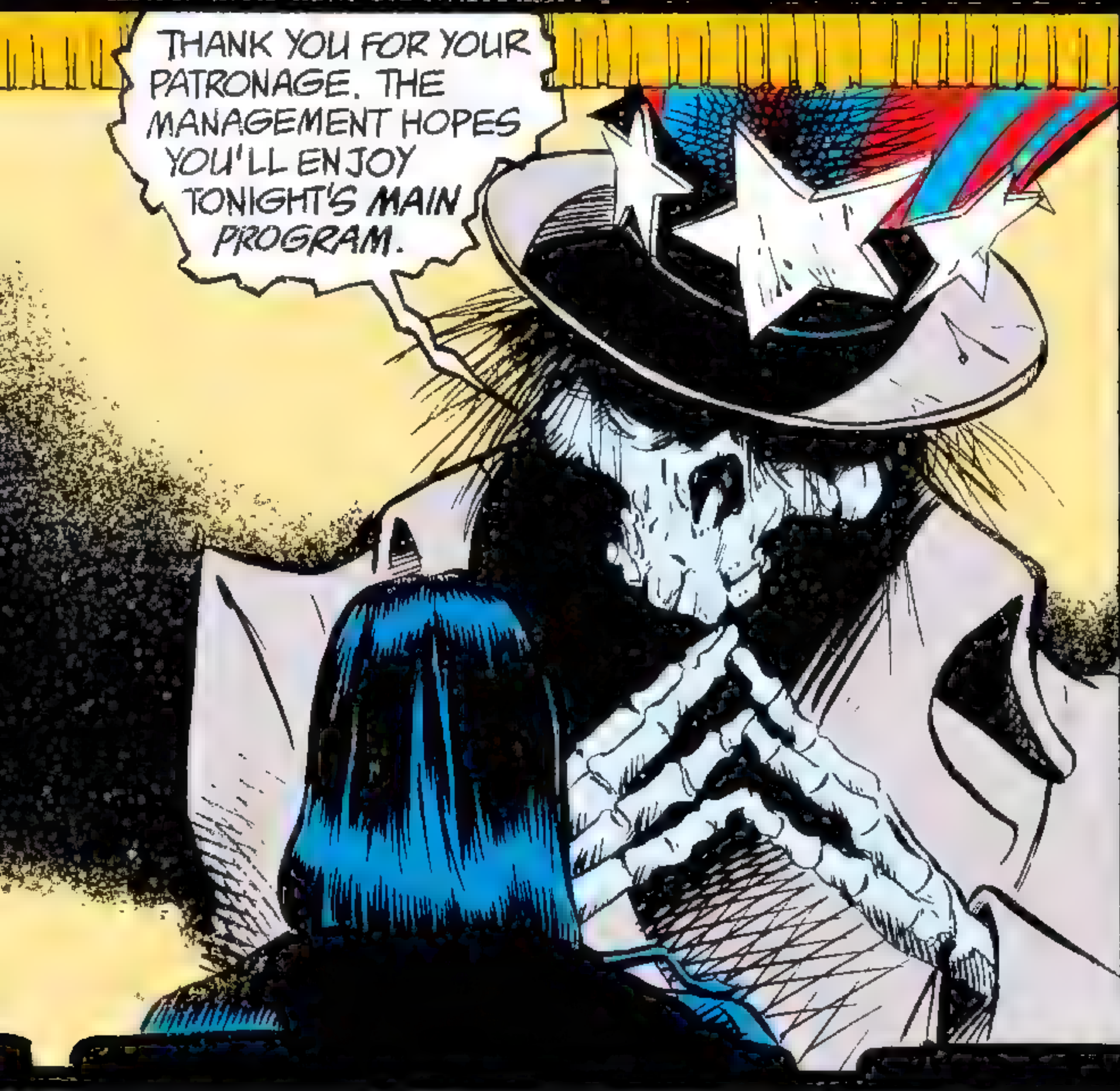
CUT TO: CLOSE-UP, KATHY.

PALE FACE
LOOKING
CONFUSED...



DOLLY BACK. INT.,
DARKENED MOVIEHOUSE.

KATHY SITS ALONE, SURROUNDED
BY EERIE ROWS OF EMPTY SEATS...



THANK YOU FOR YOUR
PATRONAGE. THE
MANAGEMENT HOPES
YOU'LL ENJOY
TONIGHT'S MAIN
PROGRAM.



OH MY
GOD...

MOM...
DAD...

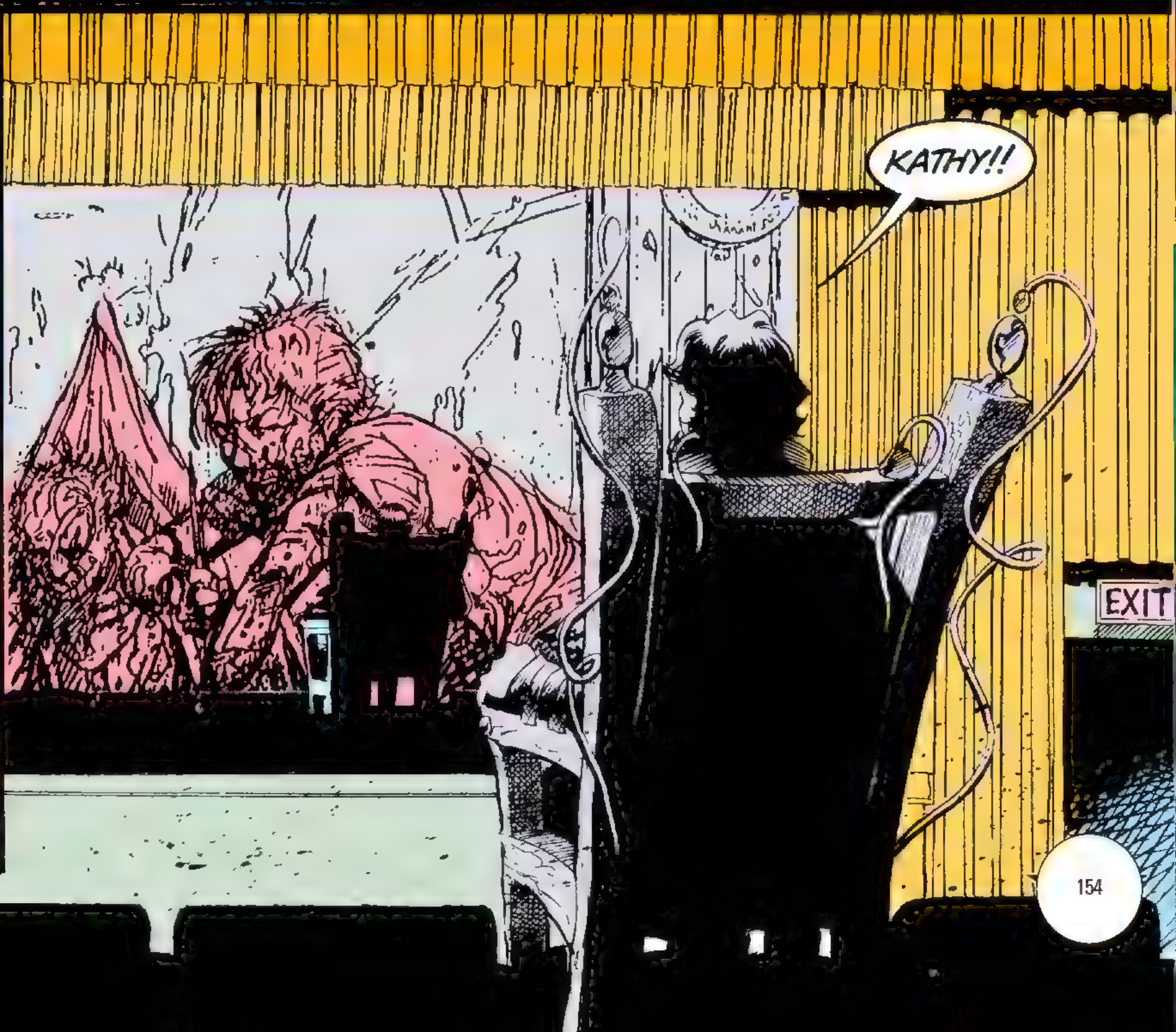
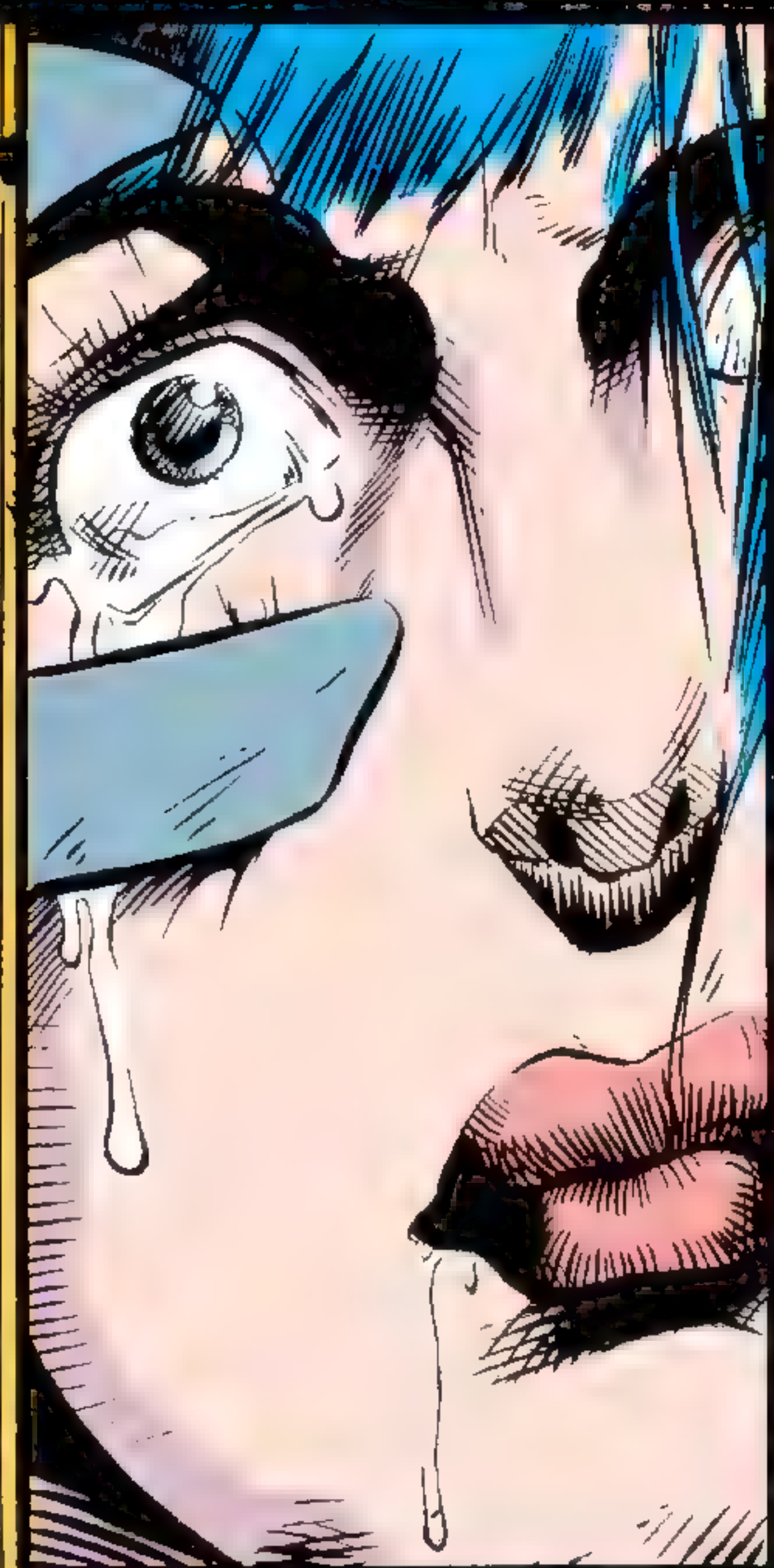
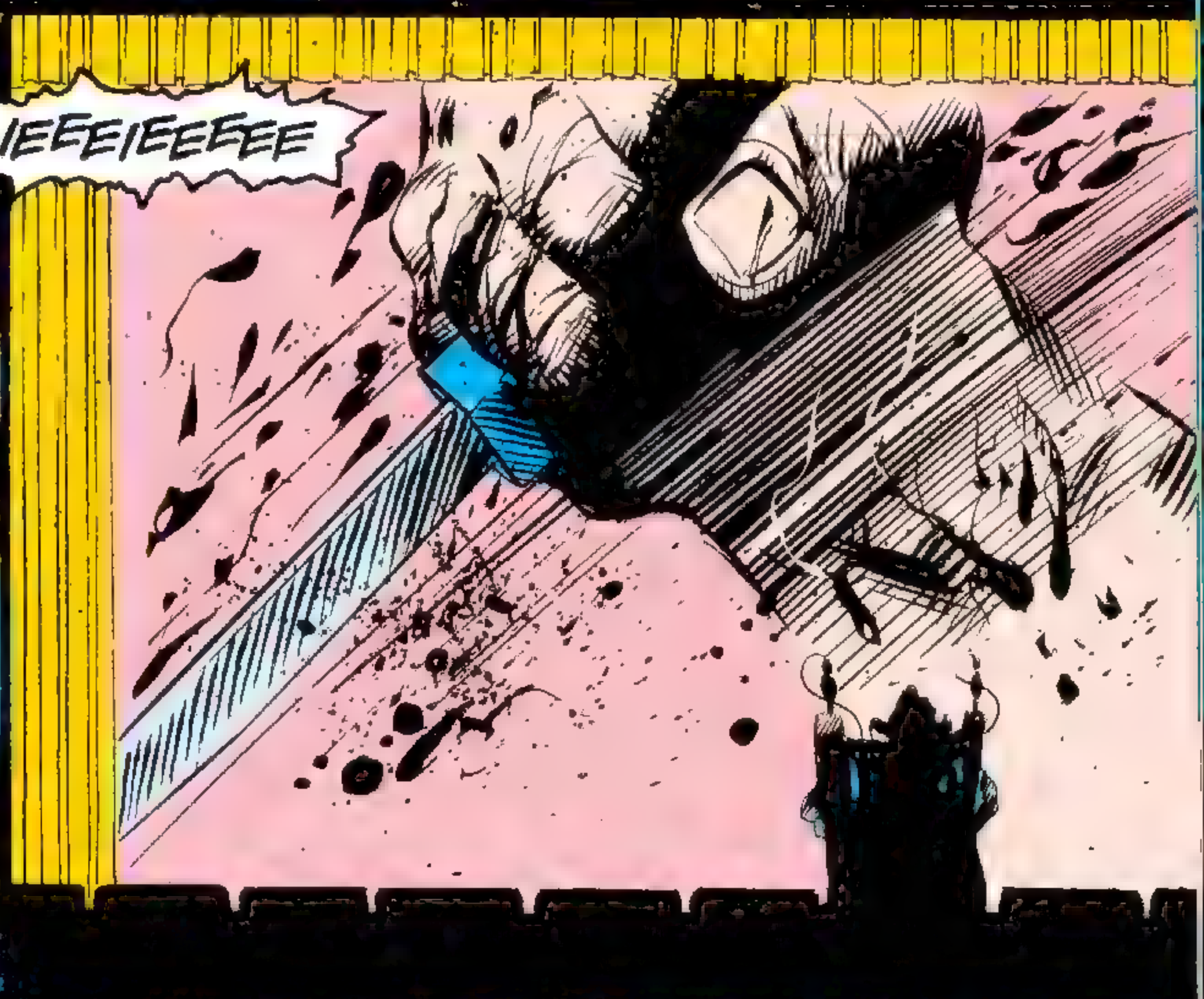
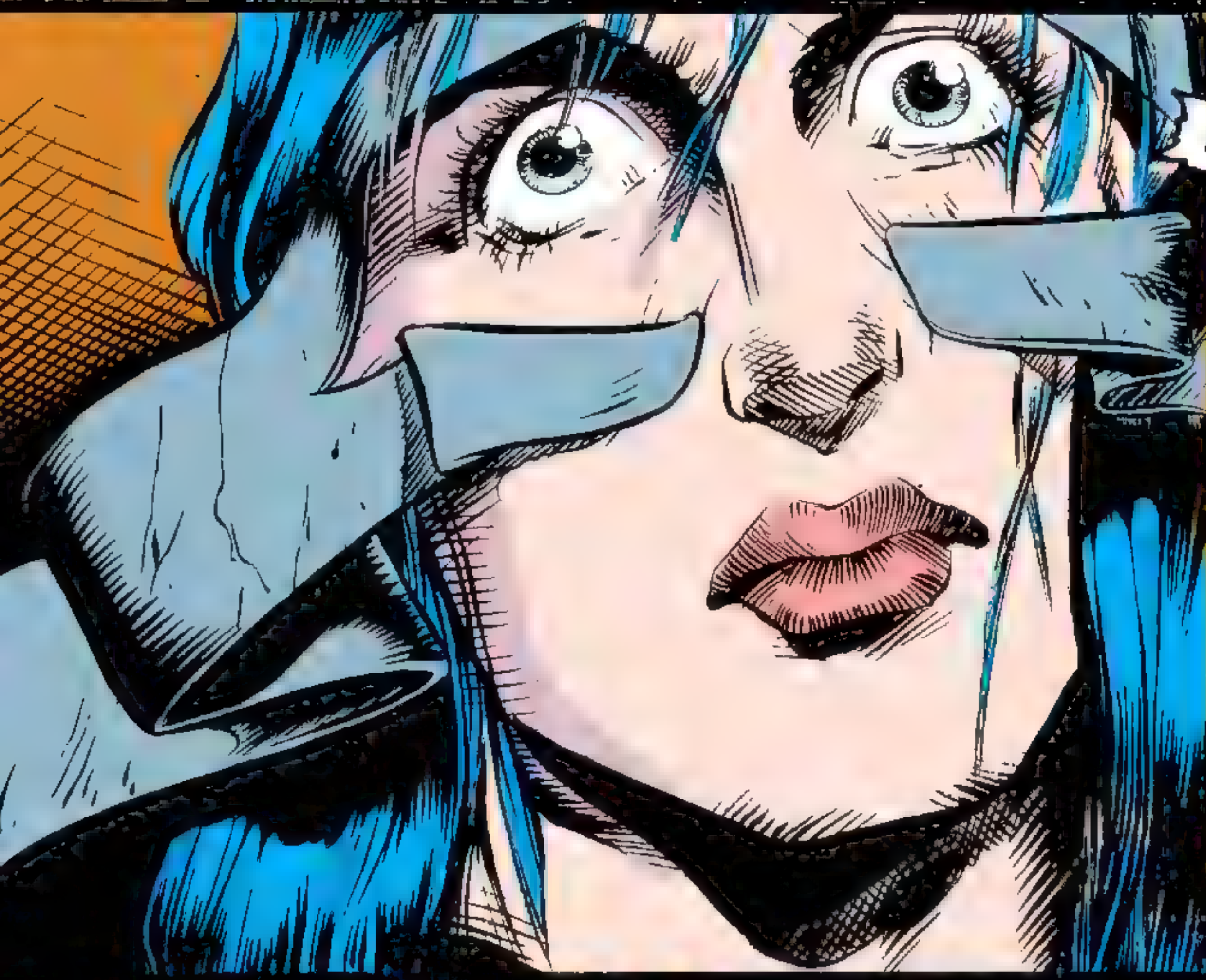
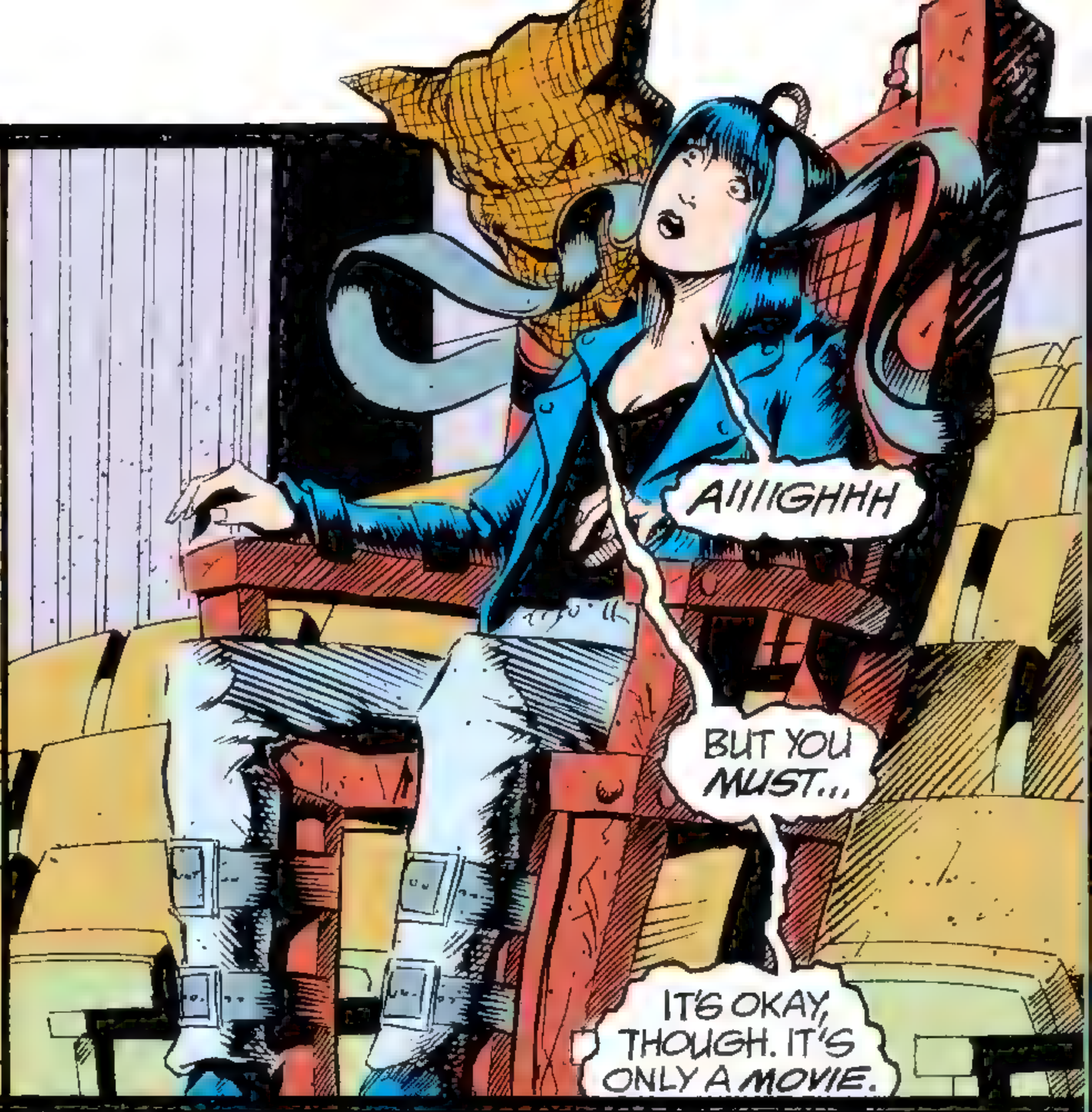
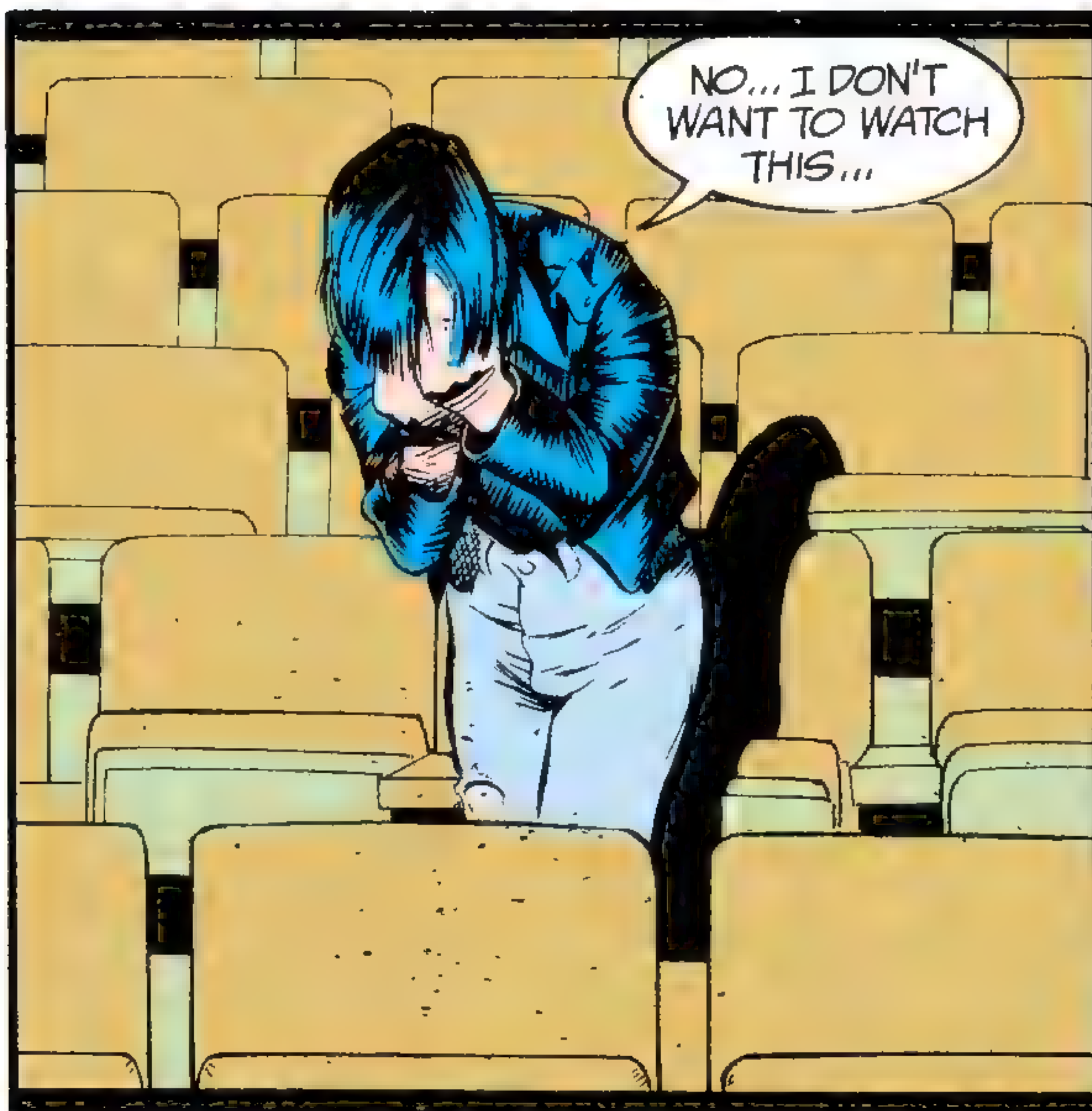


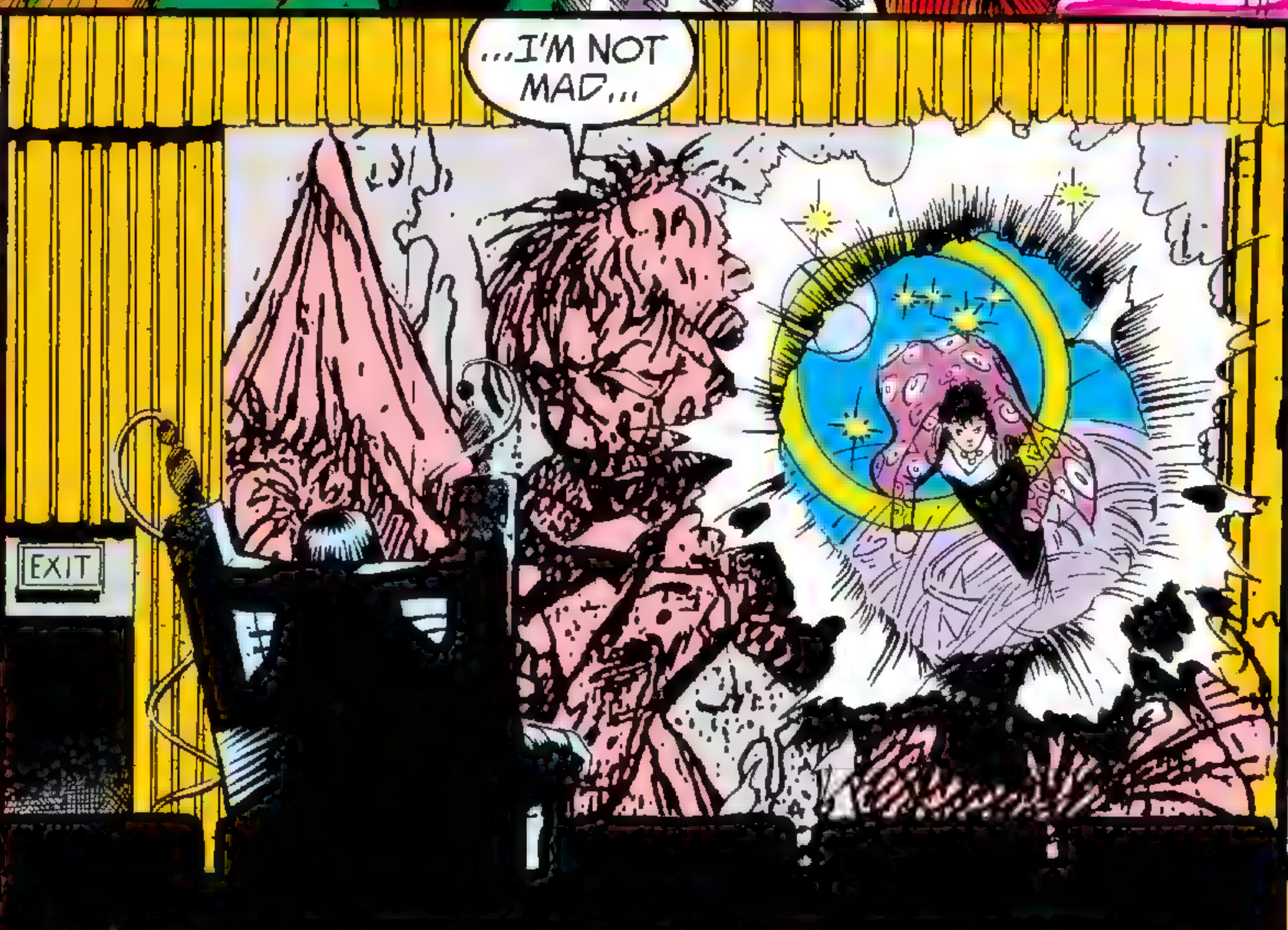
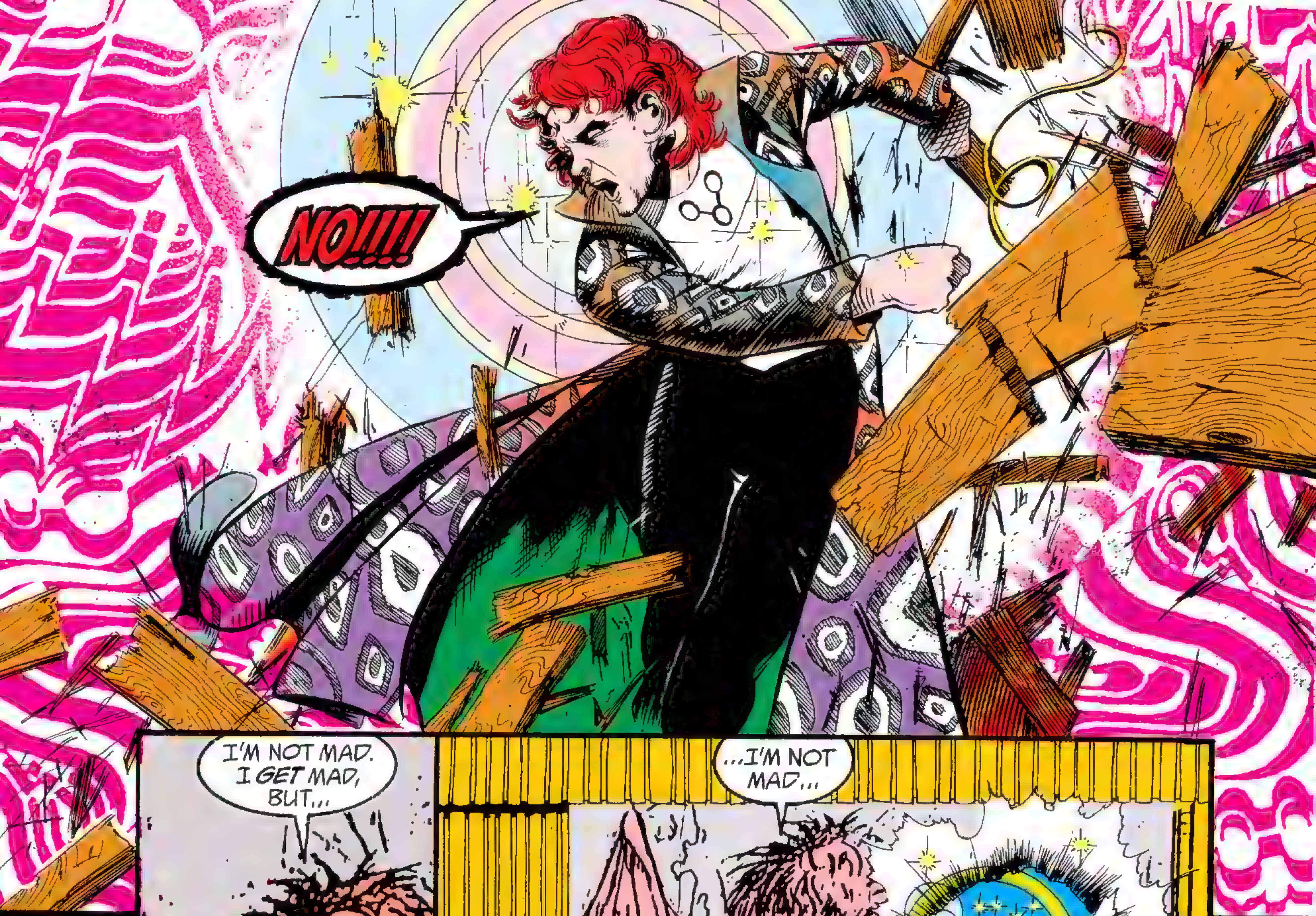
DRNGGG DRNGG

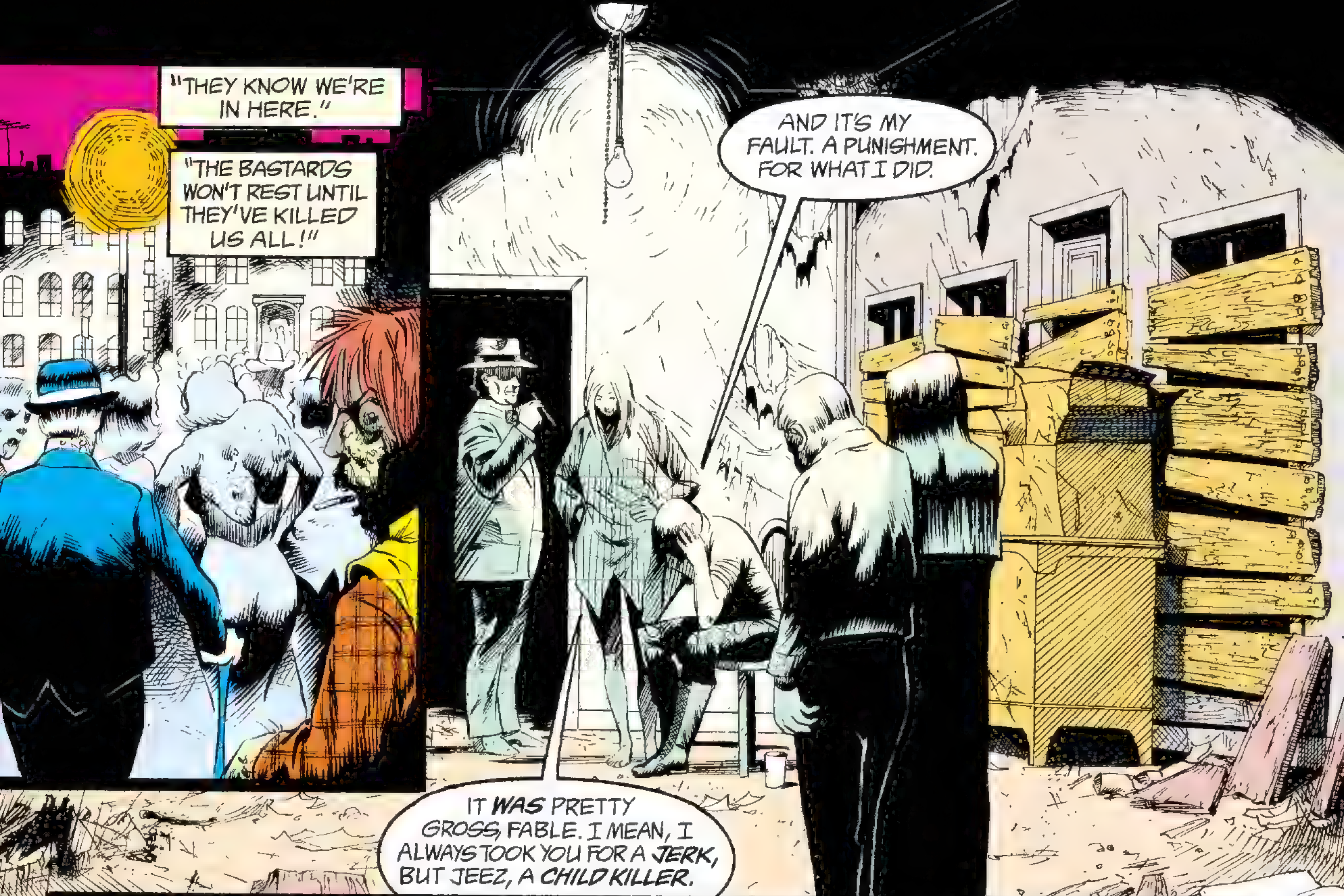
S'OKAY,
I'LL GET
IT...



MORNING,
MA'AM.
GROCERIES.







"THEY KNOW WE'RE IN HERE."

"THE BASTARDS WON'T REST UNTIL THEY'VE KILLED US ALL!"

AND IT'S MY FAULT. A PUNISHMENT. FOR WHAT I DID.

IT WAS PRETTY GROSS, FABLE. I MEAN, I ALWAYS TOOK YOU FOR A JERK, BUT JEEZ, A CHILD KILLER.

BUT I DIDN'T MEAN IT. ALL MY LIFE I'VE MANAGED TO KEEP THESE FEELINGS IN CHECK. JUST THAT ONCE, JUST THAT ONCE THEY GOT THE BETTER OF ME...

BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO HURT HER. I LOVE KIDS. IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.

D'YOU THINK A DAY'S GONE BY WHEN I HAVEN'T THOUGHT ABOUT HER? AND HER POOR PARENTS? I HATE MYSELF.

SORRY, BUT IF THIS WAS A FILM, THAT WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH, GUY. BEST YOU COULD HOPE FOR WAS TO DIE DOING SOMETHING HEROIC.

SAVING ANOTHER'S LIFE, PERHAPS. A HINT AT REDEMPTION. BUT THEY COULDN'T LET A CHILD-SLAYER GET AWAY WITH IT. TOO MESSY...

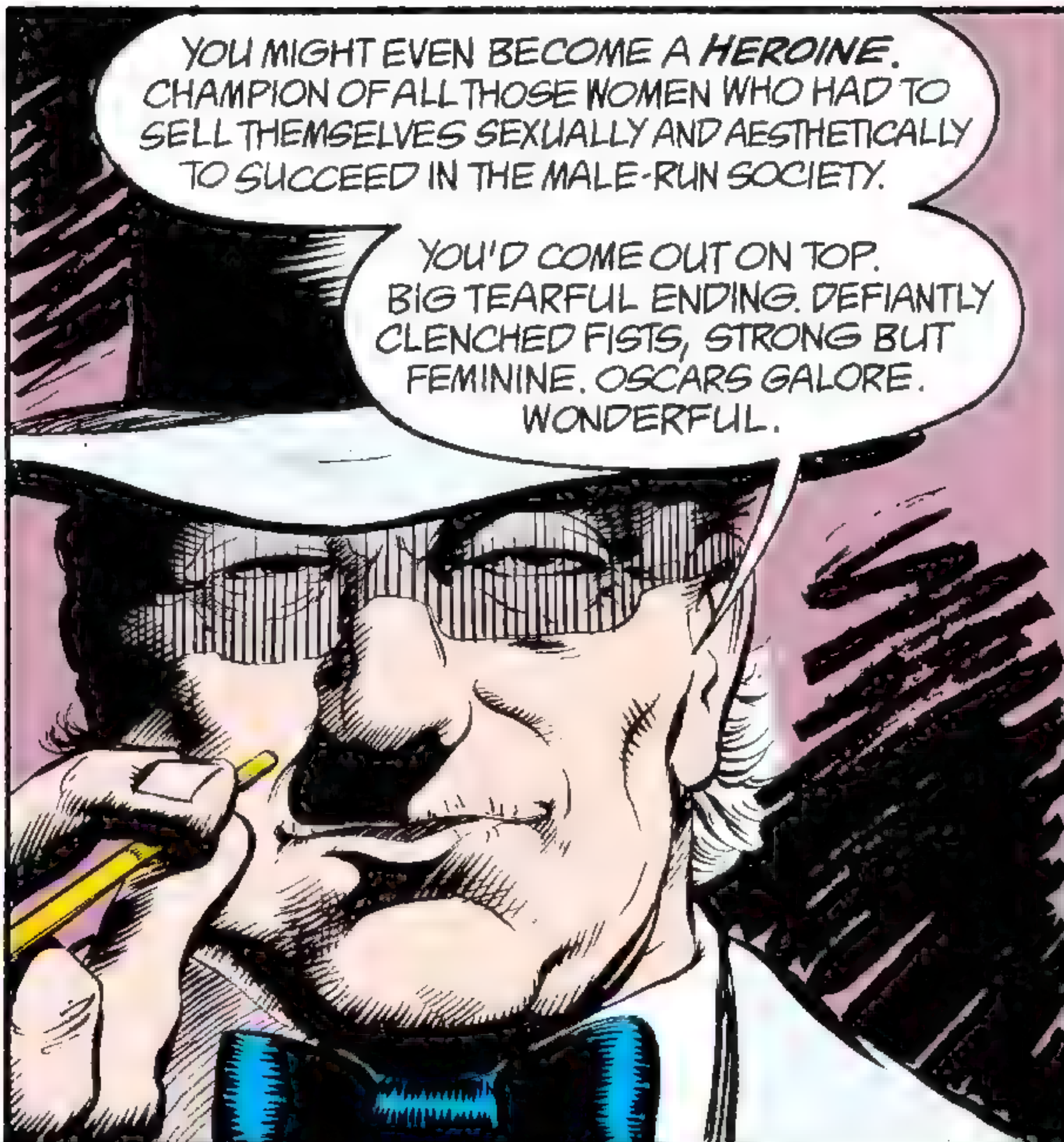
THEY'D BE SCARED IT WOULD SUGGEST THEY DIDN'T TAKE YOUR CRIME SERIOUSLY ENOUGH.

WHAT ABOUT ME? I'M RUINED. I'D PROBABLY END UP AS A JUNKIE OR SOMETHING...

OH, NOT NECESSARILY, CANDICE. YOU HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING EVIL.

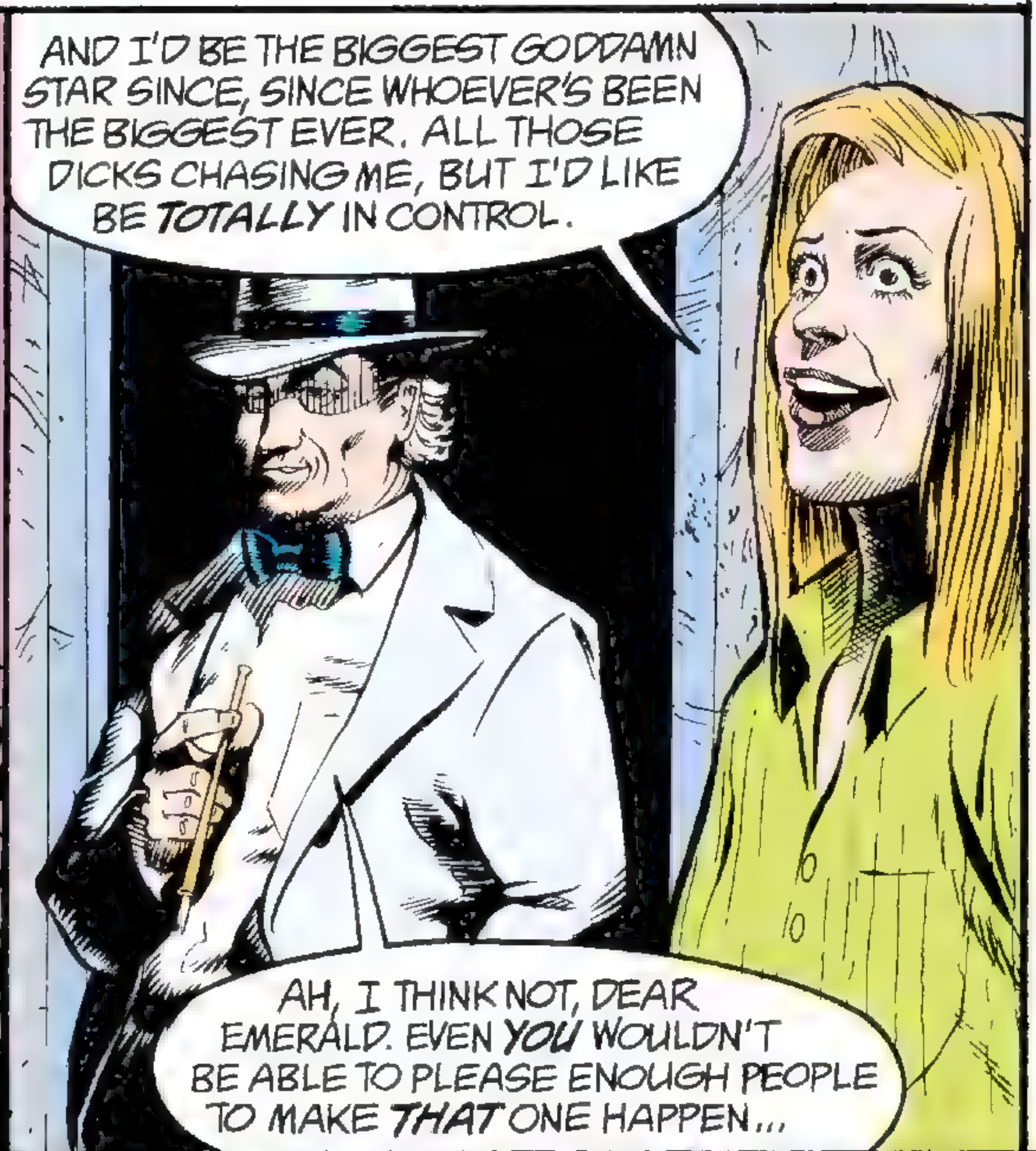
YOU'D HAVE TO SUFFER THE SLINGS AND ARROWS OF OUTRAGEOUS AND OUTRAGED MORALISTS, BUT YOU'D PROBABLY COME THROUGH...





YOU MIGHT EVEN BECOME A **HEROINE**. CHAMPION OF ALL THOSE WOMEN WHO HAD TO SELL THEMSELVES SEXUALLY AND AESTHETICALLY TO SUCCEED IN THE MALE-RUN SOCIETY.

YOU'D COME OUT ON TOP. BIG TEARFUL ENDING. DEFIANTLY CLENCHED FISTS, STRONG BUT FEMININE. OSCARS GALORE. WONDERFUL.



AND I'D BE THE BIGGEST GODDAMN STAR SINCE, SINCE WHOEVER'S BEEN THE BIGGEST EVER. ALL THOSE DICKS CHASING ME, BUT I'D LIKE BE **TOTALLY** IN CONTROL.

AH, I THINK NOT, DEAR EMERALD. EVEN **YOU** WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO PLEASE ENOUGH PEOPLE TO MAKE **THAT** ONE HAPPEN...



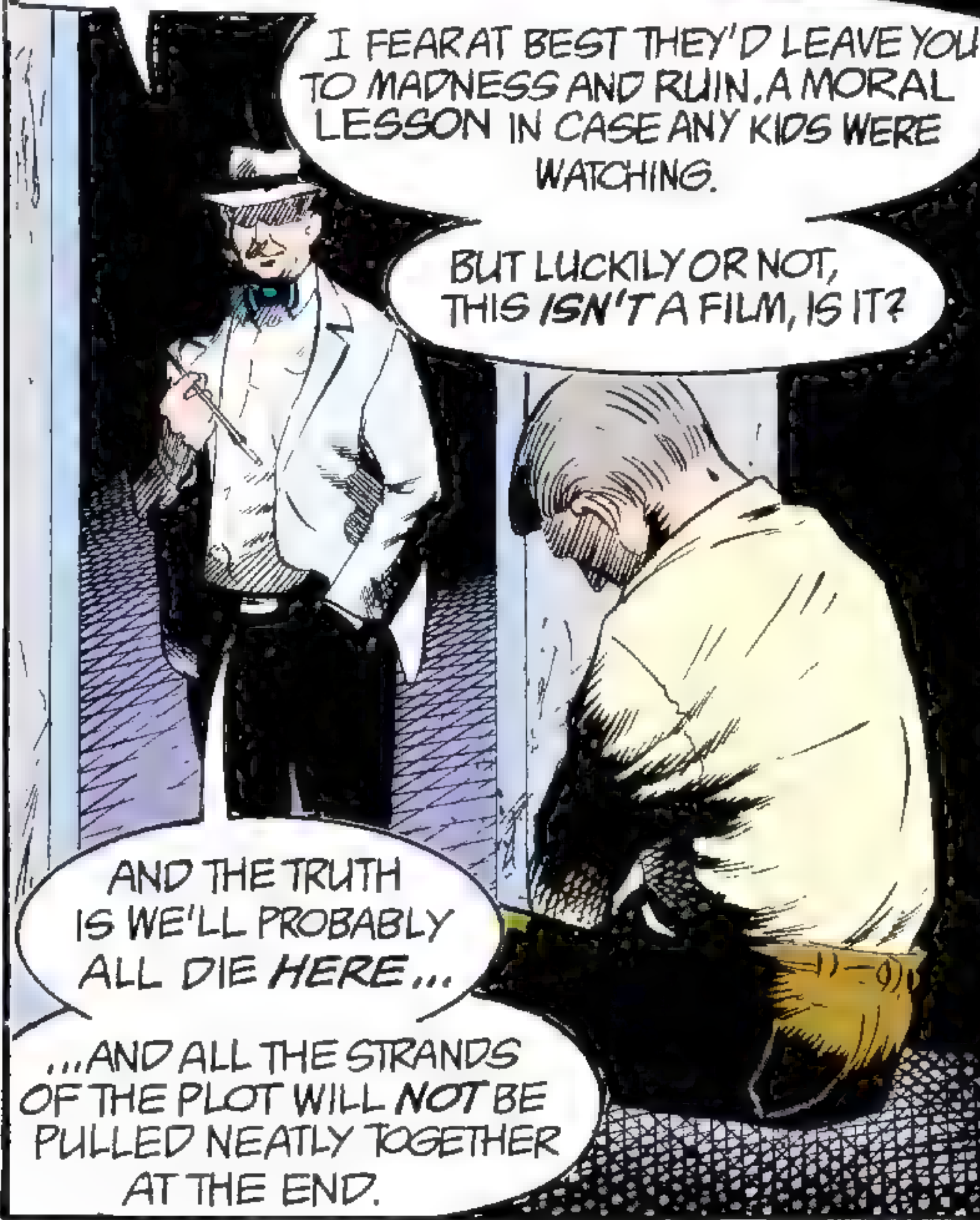
DROP DEAD, ASSHOLE.

SOON, DEAR, SOON.

NO, I FEEL YOUR FILM COULD EITHER GO UP OR DOWN. UP WOULD MEAN YOU FIND YOUR SWEET BABY AGAIN AND TURN YOUR BACK ON THE FAST LANE

DOWN, YOU DO AWAY WITH YOURSELF. A TERRIBLE LESSON ON THE EXCESSES OF AMBITION...

AH, BUT KENT! WHAT **WOULD** THEY DO WITH YOU? DRUGS AND PEDERASTY!



I FEAR AT BEST THEY'D LEAVE YOU TO MADNESS AND RUIN. A MORAL LESSON IN CASE ANY KIDS WERE WATCHING.

BUT LUCKILY OR NOT, THIS **ISN'T** A FILM, IS IT?

AND THE TRUTH IS WE'LL PROBABLY ALL DIE **HERE**...

...AND ALL THE STRANDS OF THE PLOT WILL **NOT** BE PULLED NEATLY TOGETHER AT THE END.



OH, MY GOD!

I'M AFRAID HE CAN'T HELP YOU, MY DEAR.



HOW ARE YOU NOW?
CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING?
DO ANYTHING AT ALL?

NO. IT'S
OKAY. I'M OKAY
NOW. THANKS.



I MEAN IT.
THANKS, SHADE.
YOU'RE ALL
RIGHT.

I THINK WE'VE GOT TO FIND THAT
CAMERA. MAYBE HEAD FOR THE STUDIO
WHERE THEY WERE MAKING
HOLLYWOOD MONSTERS...

WHAT
HAPPENS
NOW? THIS
ISN'T OVER
YET, IS
IT?



I'VE A BETTER IDEA.
THE CAMERA'S MAKING A
KIND OF CRAZY, ILLOGICAL
MULTI-LAYERED MOVIE,
RIGHT?

ERR, YEAH, SOMETHING
LIKE THAT.



WELL, YOU'RE THE
CHANGING MAN, AREN'T
YOU? SO WHY NOT *CHANGE*
THE MOVIE? WRITE A
BETTER ONE! ONE
WHERE...

ONE WHERE
THE CAMERA GETS
DESTROYED AND
EVERYTHING GOES
BACK TO NORMAL.

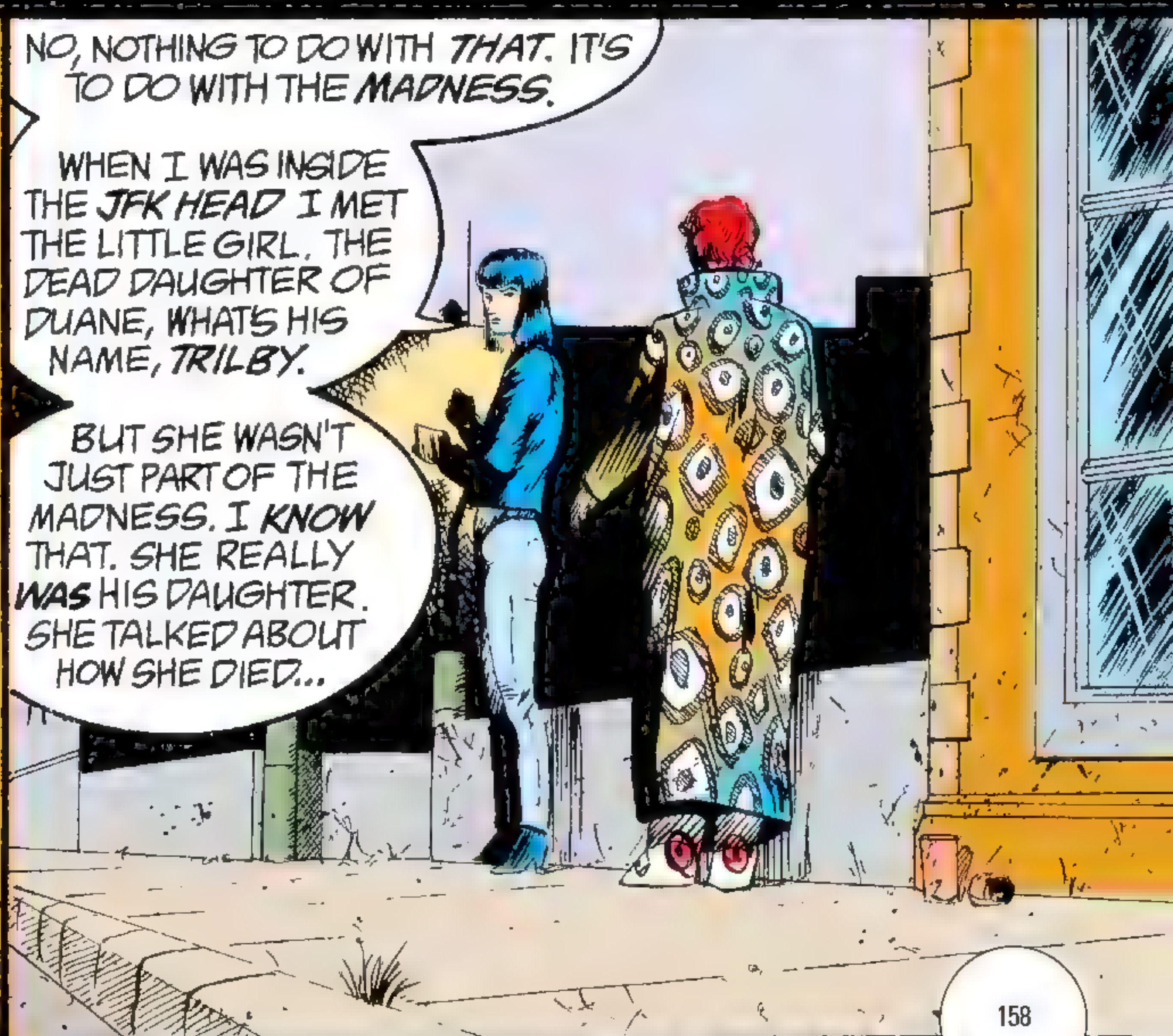
YES! KATHY,
THAT'S BRILLIANT!



YEAH, BUT LISTEN, THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT
TO TELL YOU. TO ASK YOU.

I GUESS AS WHAT
WE'RE GOING TO DO IS
PRETTY RISKY I'D ...

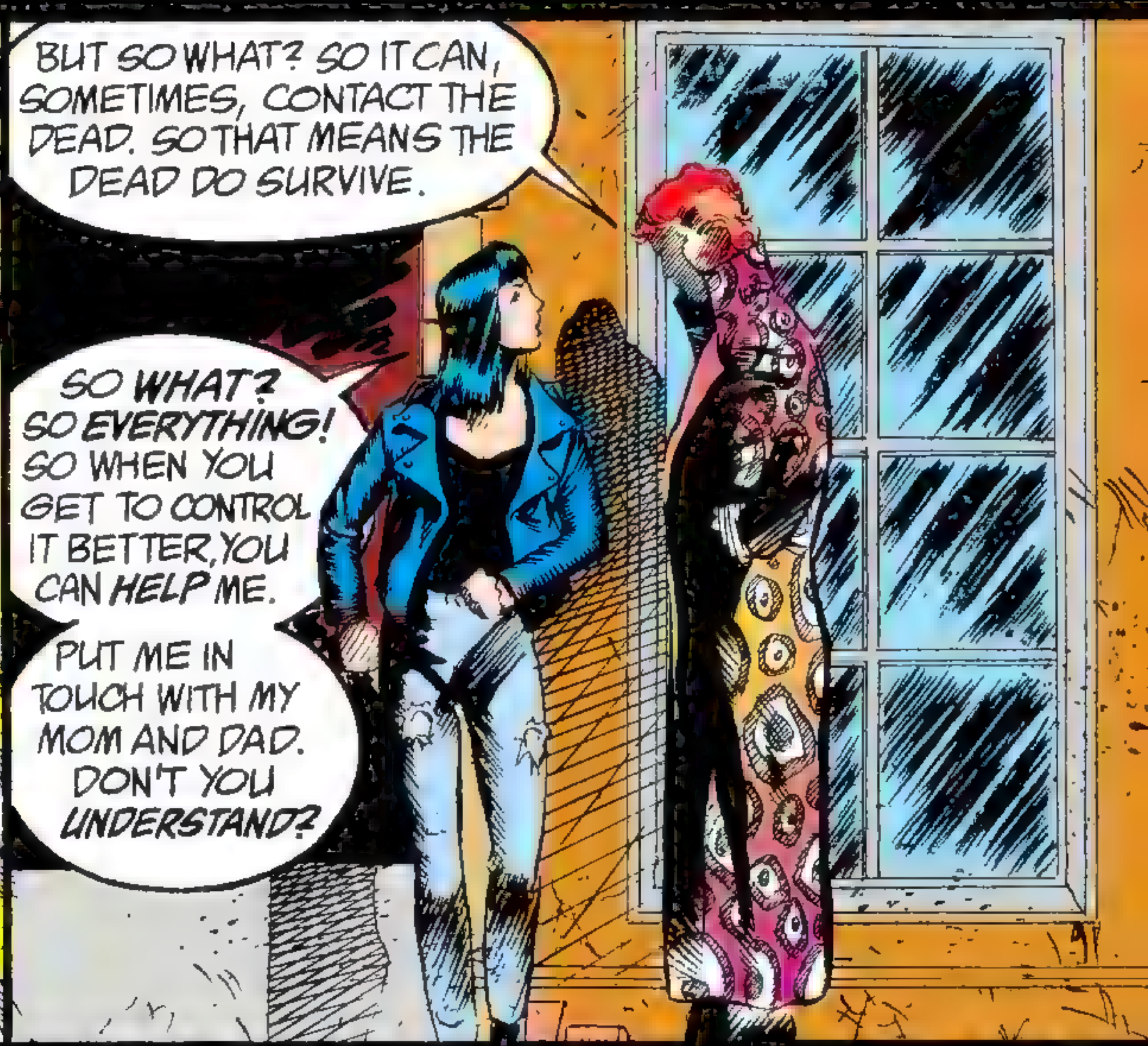
I KNOW, I'M
FEELING THE SAME
WAY, KATHY, I...



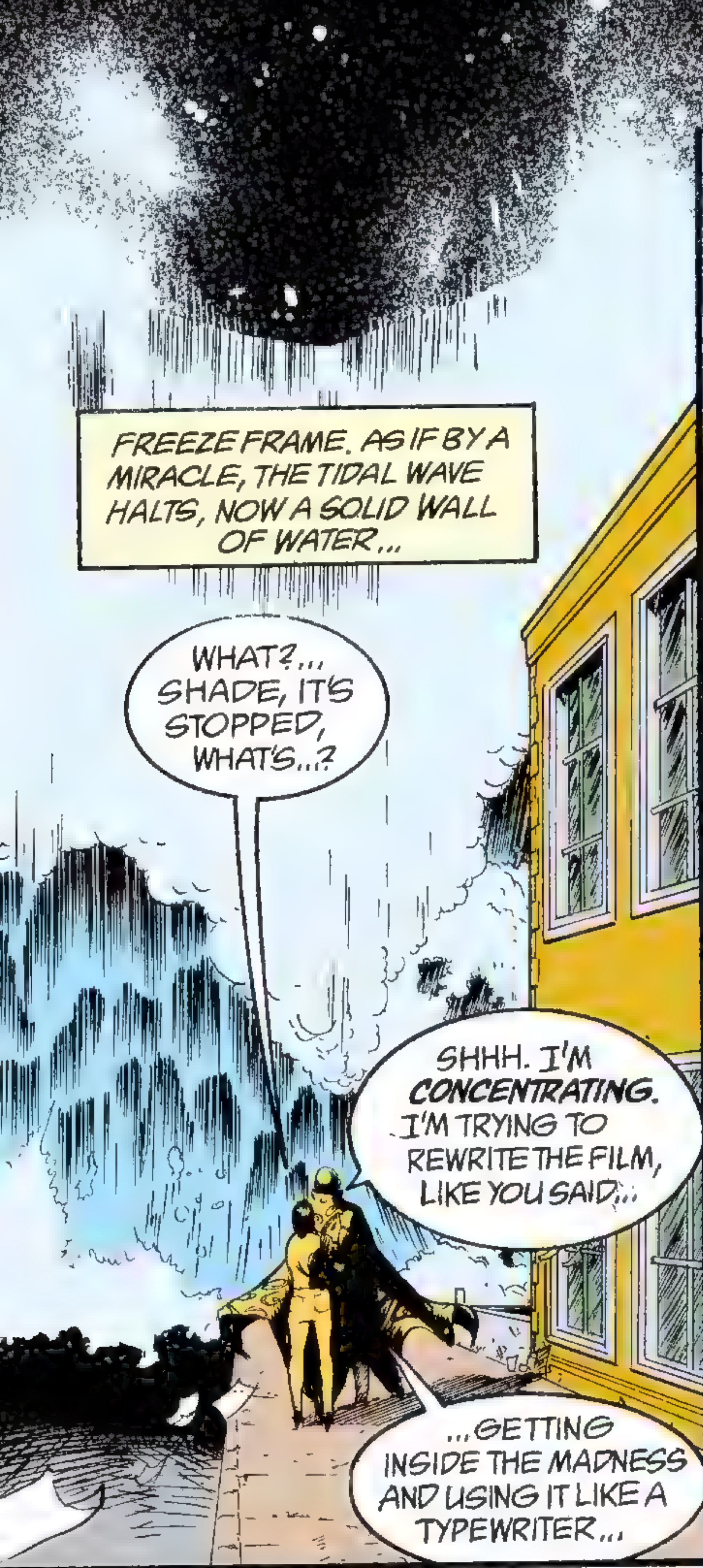
NO, NOTHING TO DO WITH *THAT*. IT'S
TO DO WITH THE *MADNESS*.

WHEN I WAS INSIDE
THE *JFK HEAD* I MET
THE LITTLE GIRL, THE
DEAD DAUGHTER OF
DUANE, WHAT'S HIS
NAME, *TRILBY*.

BUT SHE WASN'T
JUST PART OF THE
MADNESS. I *KNOW*
THAT. SHE REALLY
WAS HIS DAUGHTER.
SHE TALKED ABOUT
HOW SHE DIED...







FREEZE FRAME. AS IF BY A MIRACLE, THE TIDAL WAVE HALTS, NOW A SOLID WALL OF WATER...

WHAT?...
SHADE, IT'S STOPPED,
WHAT'S...?

SHHH. I'M
CONCENTRATING.
I'M TRYING TO
REWRITE THE FILM,
LIKE YOU SAID...

...GETTING
INSIDE THE MADNESS
AND USING IT LIKE A
TYPEWRITER...



YOU MEAN YOU'RE
STOPPING THE
WATER?

I HOPE
IT'S ME.

CUT TO, A
SCRIPTWRITER'S
STUDY, SUNSET
BOULEVARD. SUN-
LIGHT STEALING
THROUGH VENETIAN
BLINDS...



TAKE
THIS DOWN,
KATHY...

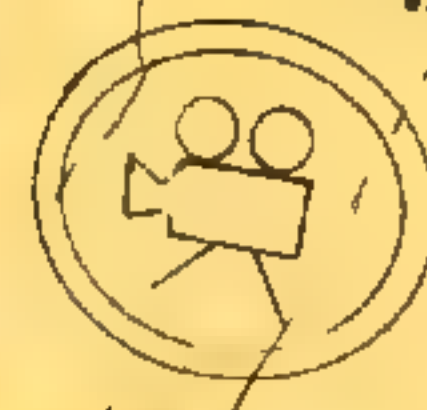
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!
I'M NO SECRETARY!
I'M AT LEAST A SCRIPT
EDITOR OR A PRODUCER
OR SOMETHING...

WE HEAR A SMASH. INTO
THE GLOOMY STUDY FLIES
A STAR...

NOT A BIG STAR, NOT A
KNOWN STAR, BUT ONE OF
THE MANY, ONE OF THE
STARS OF BROKEN DREAMS...

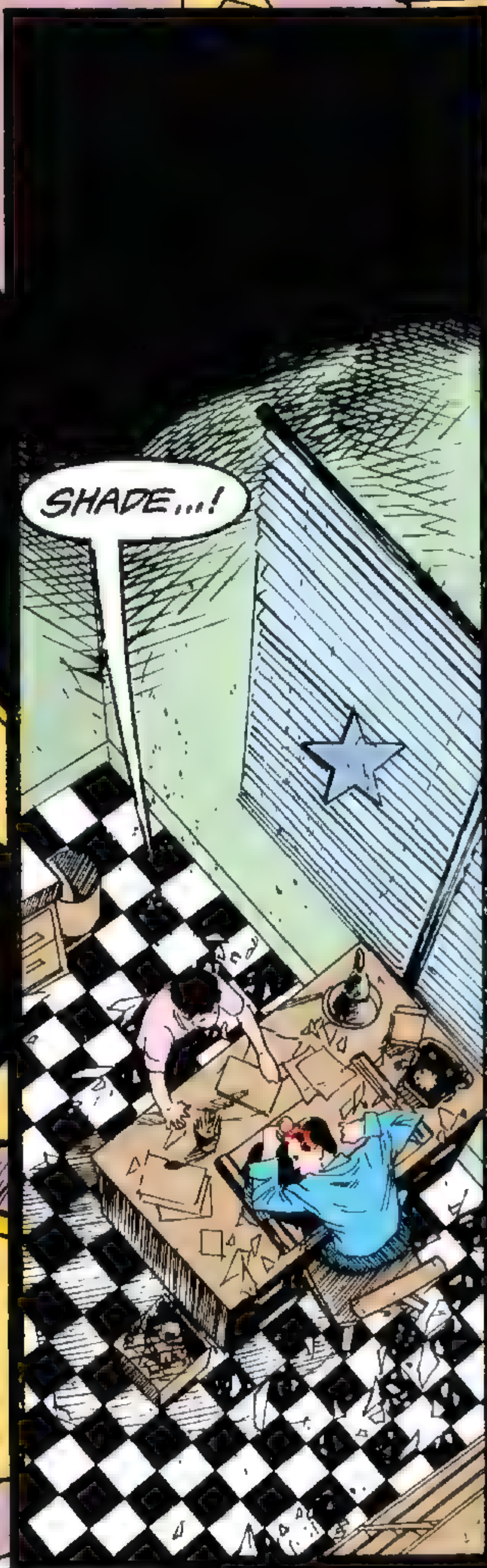


HATTIE MACKAY



ONE OF THE STARS
THAT NEVER WERE...

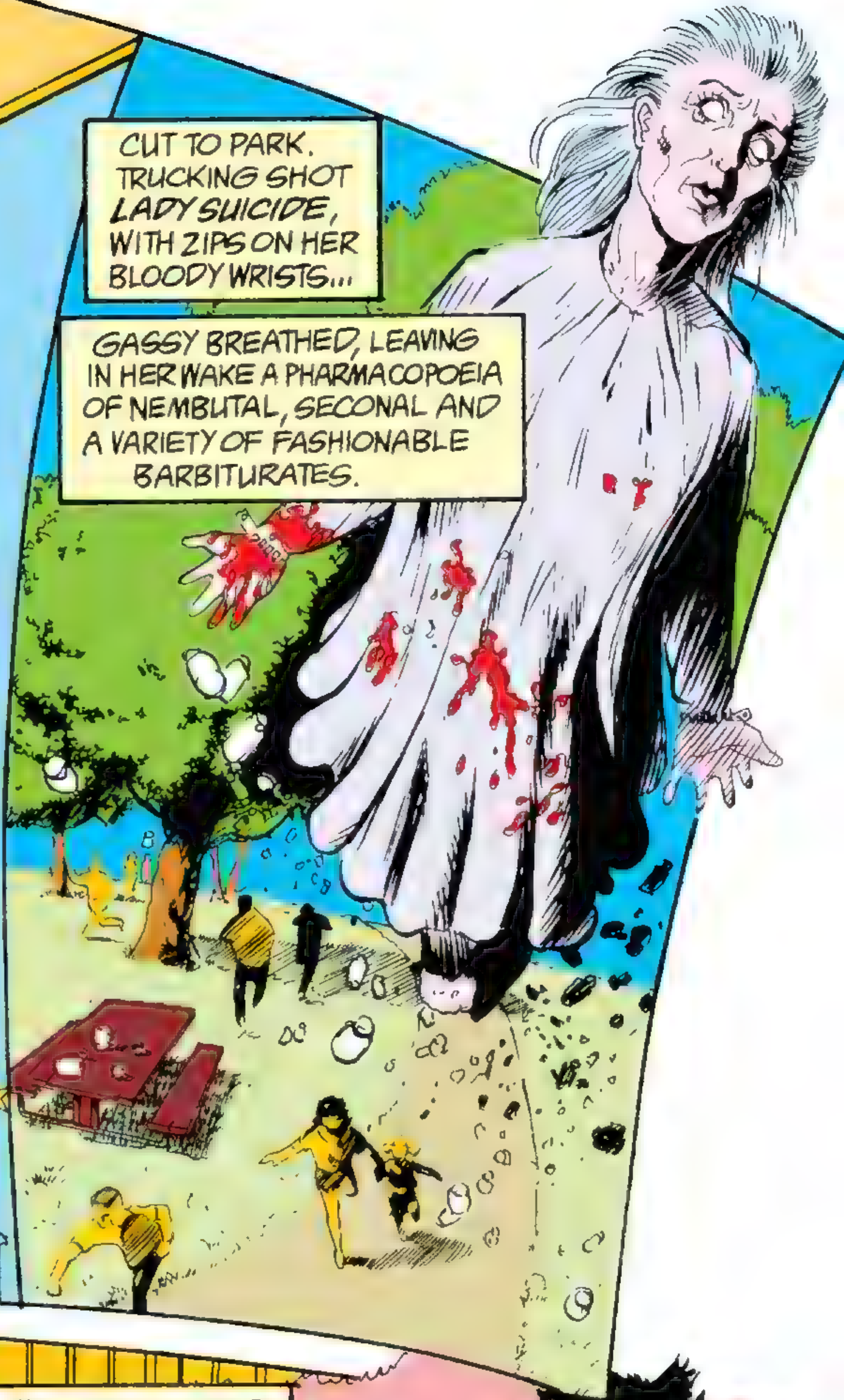
HATTIE MACKAY, EVER
HEARD OF HER? 'COURSE
NOT! ENDED UP A WAITRESS...



SHADE...!

CUT TO EXT, MEDIUM SHOT. FROM EVERY BURNING SIDEWALK THE STARS THAT NEVER WERE EMERGE...

BUILD MUSIC UP, WE'RE REACHING THE BIG CLIMAX. THINGS HAPPENING FASTER NOW, GETTING WEIRDER.



CUT TO PARK. TRUCKING SHOT LADY SUICIDE, WITH ZIPS ON HER BLOODY WRISTS...

GASSY BREATHED, LEAVING IN HER WAKE A PHARMACOPOEIA OF NEMBUTAL, SECONAL AND A VARIETY OF FASHIONABLE BARBITURATES.

PAN TO THE CASTING COUCHES.

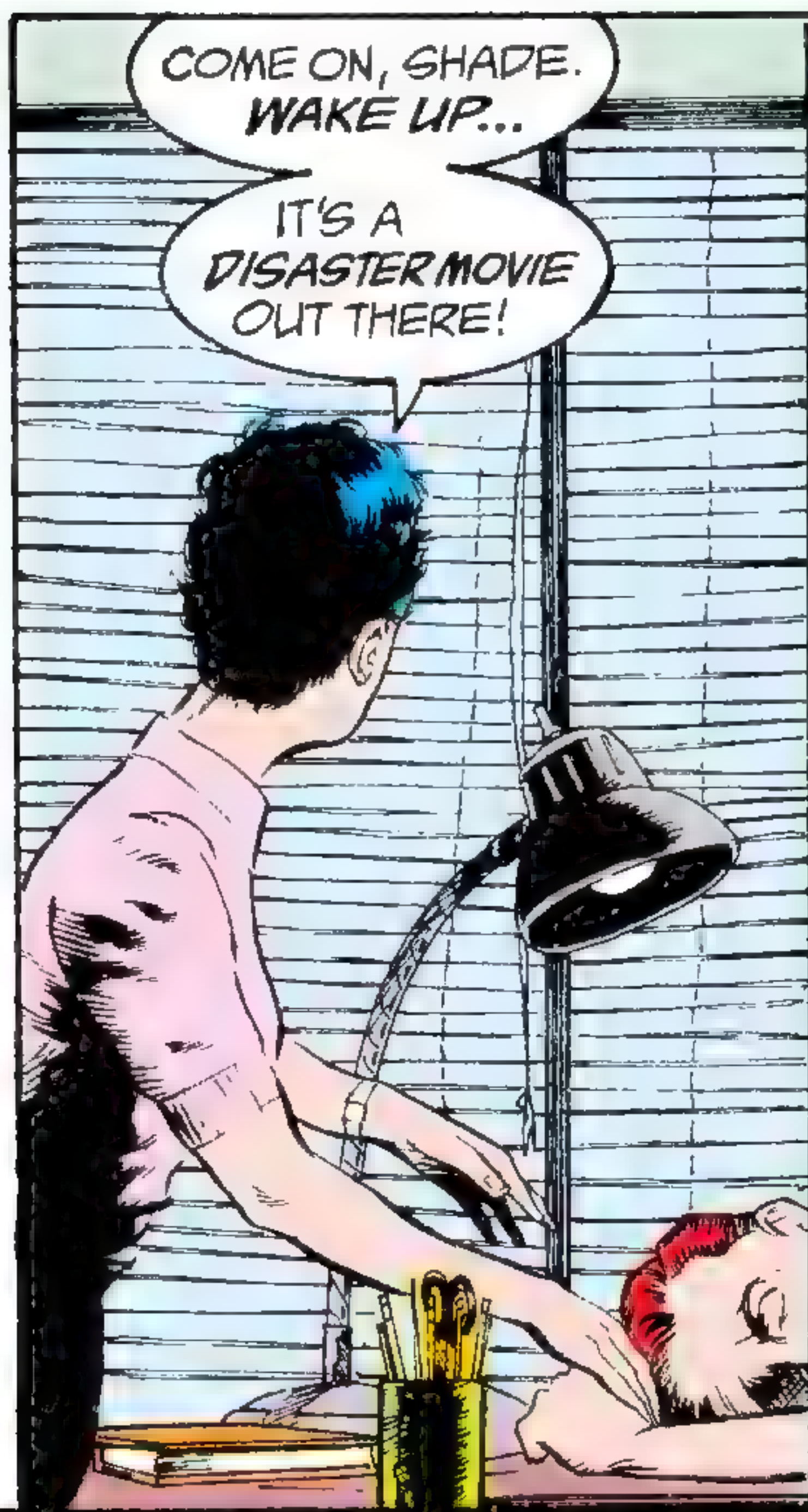
ACCOSTING YOUNG LADIES AND PROMISING TO MAKE THEM STARS. CUT TO...

INT. CINEMA, THE MOVIE SCREEN TEARS ITSELF FROM THE WALL...



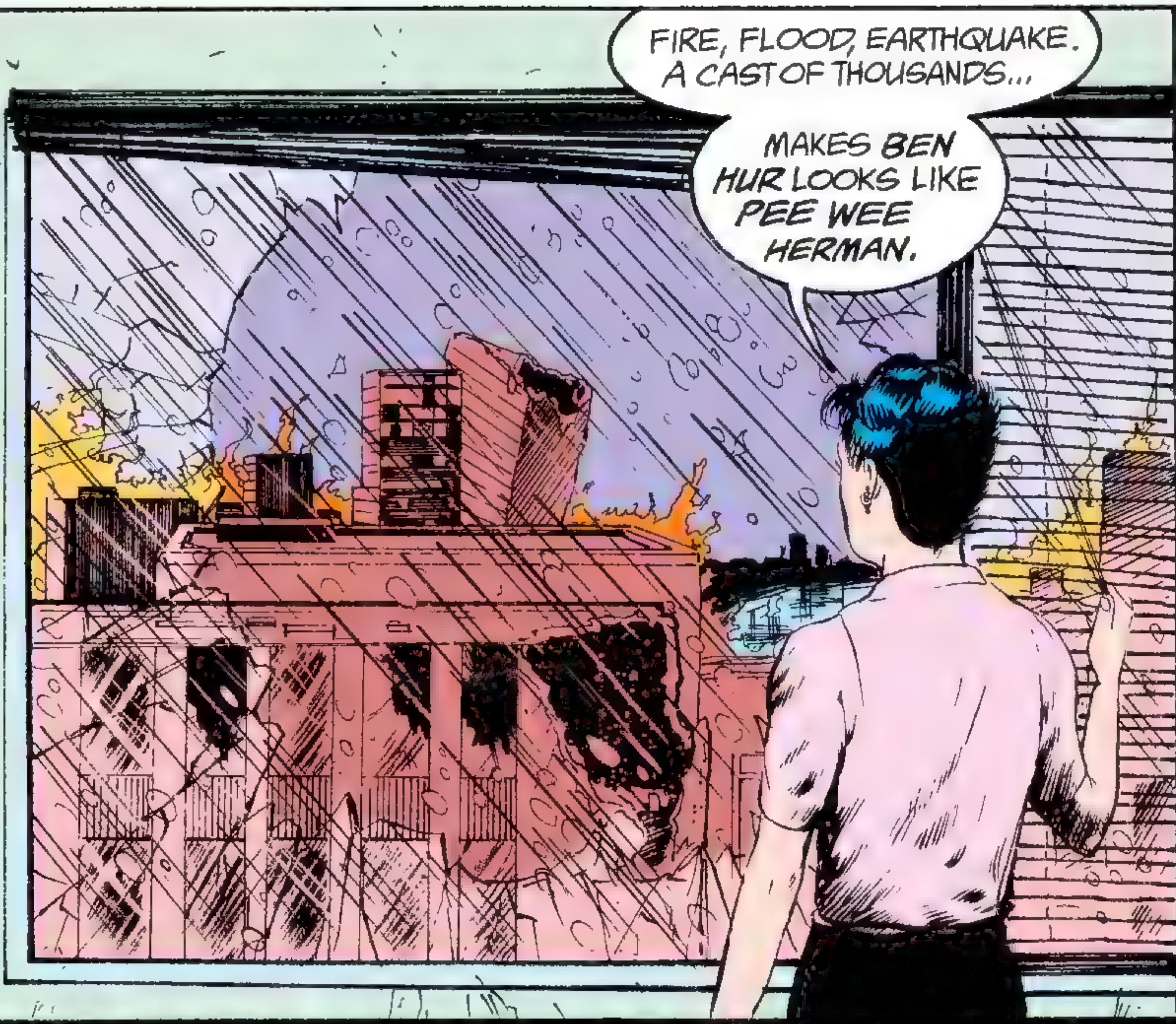
...HOVERS LIKE A RIP IN REALITY ABOVE THE HUSHED AUDIENCE...





COME ON, SHADE.
WAKE UP...

IT'S A
DISASTER MOVIE
OUT THERE!



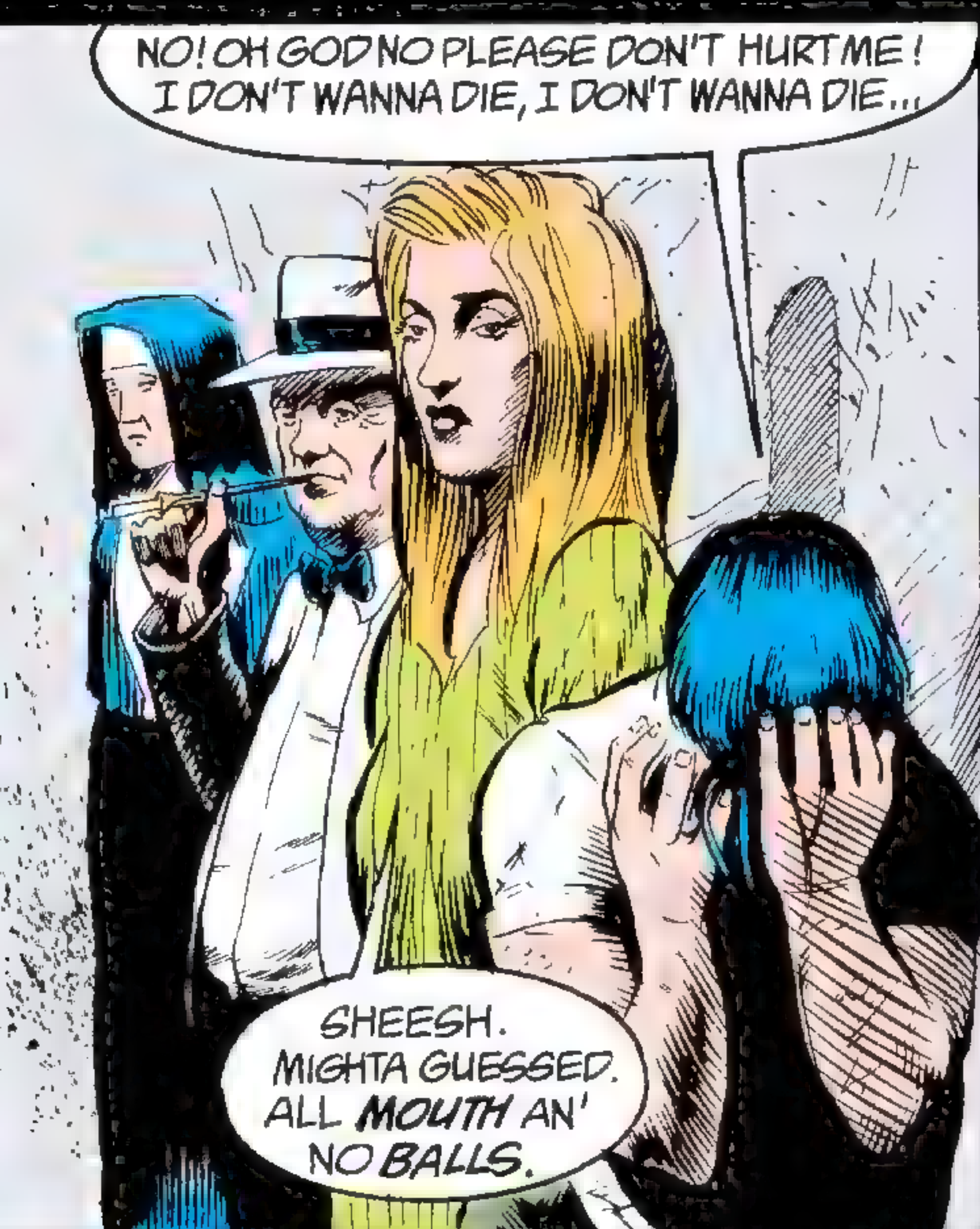
FIRE, FLOOD, EARTHQUAKE.
A CAST OF THOUSANDS...

MAKES BEN
HUR LOOKS LIKE
PEE WEE
HERMAN.



CUT TO INT, LAST
HIDING PLACE...

WELL, DUCKIES.
WHO WANTS A
SCREENTEST
FIRST?



NO! OH GOD NO PLEASE DON'T HURT ME!
I DON'T WANNA DIE, I DON'T WANNA DIE...

SHEESH.
MIGHTA GUESSED.
ALL MOUTH AN'
NO BALLS.



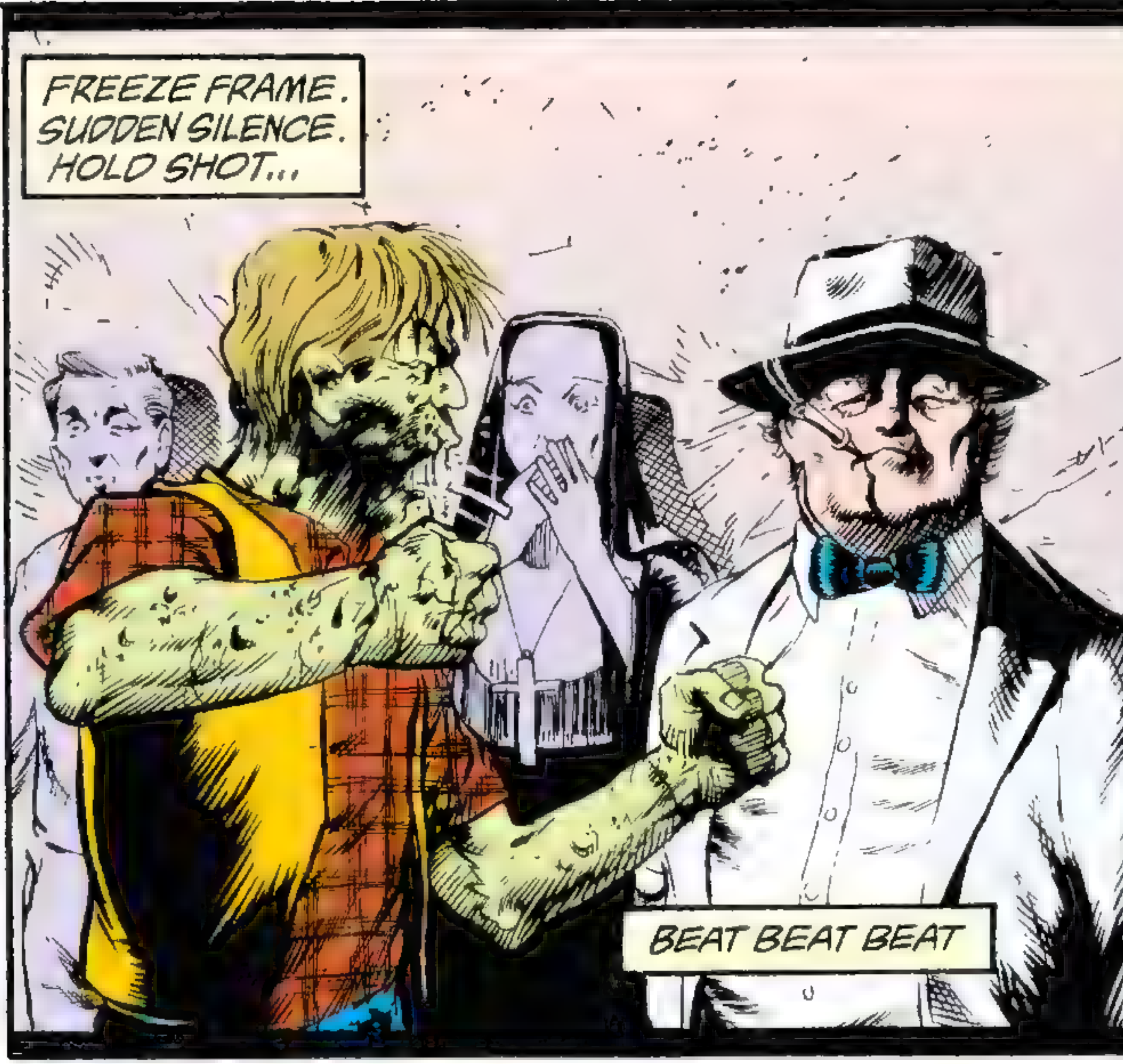
YOU MIGHT TAKE ME FIRST. I'M AN AVOWED
COWARD AND PACIFIST AND HATE THE
SIGHT OF BLOOD.

COULDN'T STAND
WATCHING THESE NICE
PEOPLE BEING TORN TO SHREDS.



WELL, I'M WAITING.

THIS COULD
ONLY HAPPEN IN
AMERICA, COULDN'T
IT?



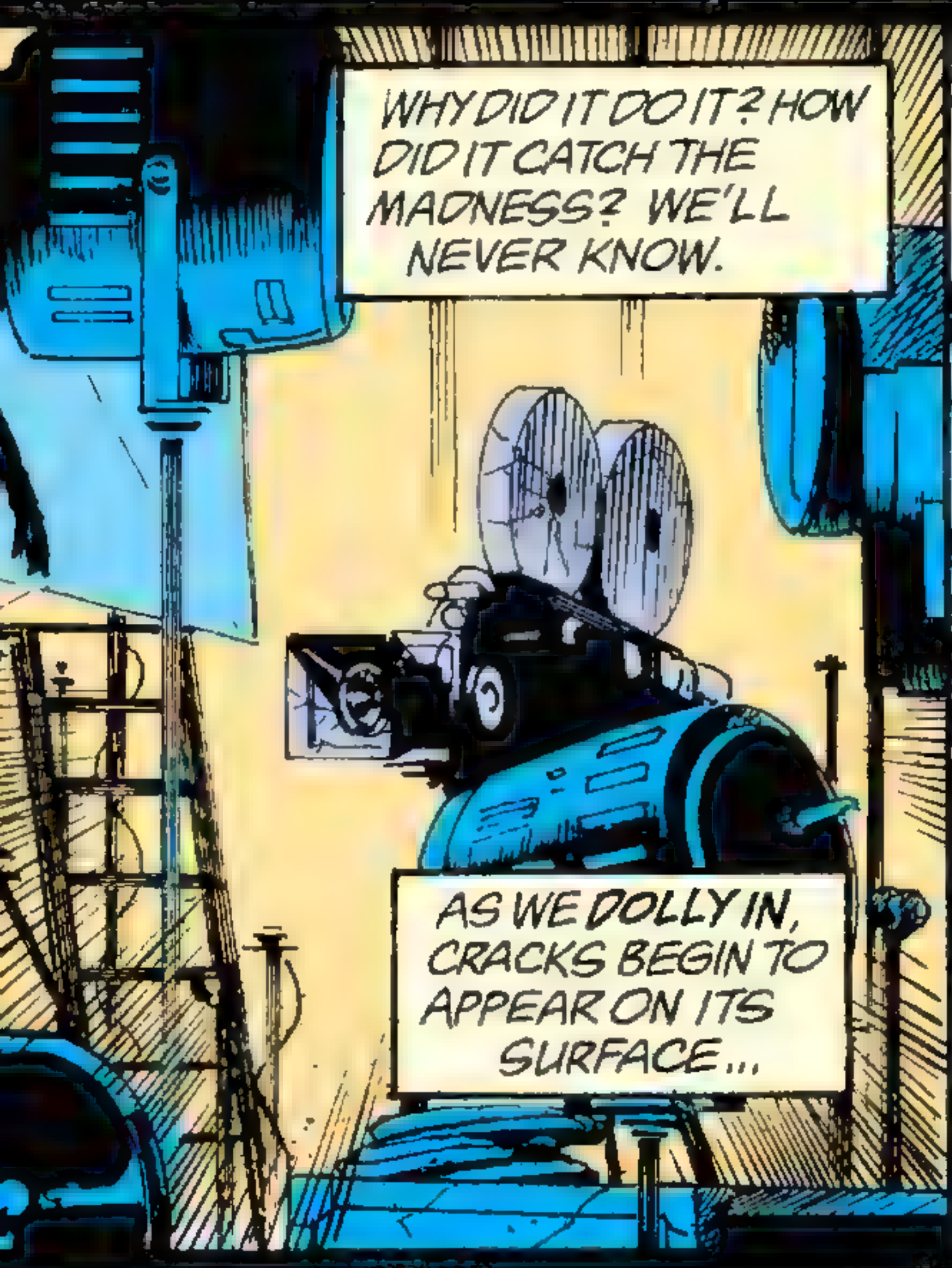
FREEZE FRAME.
SUDDEN SILENCE.
HOLD SHOT...

BEAT BEAT BEAT



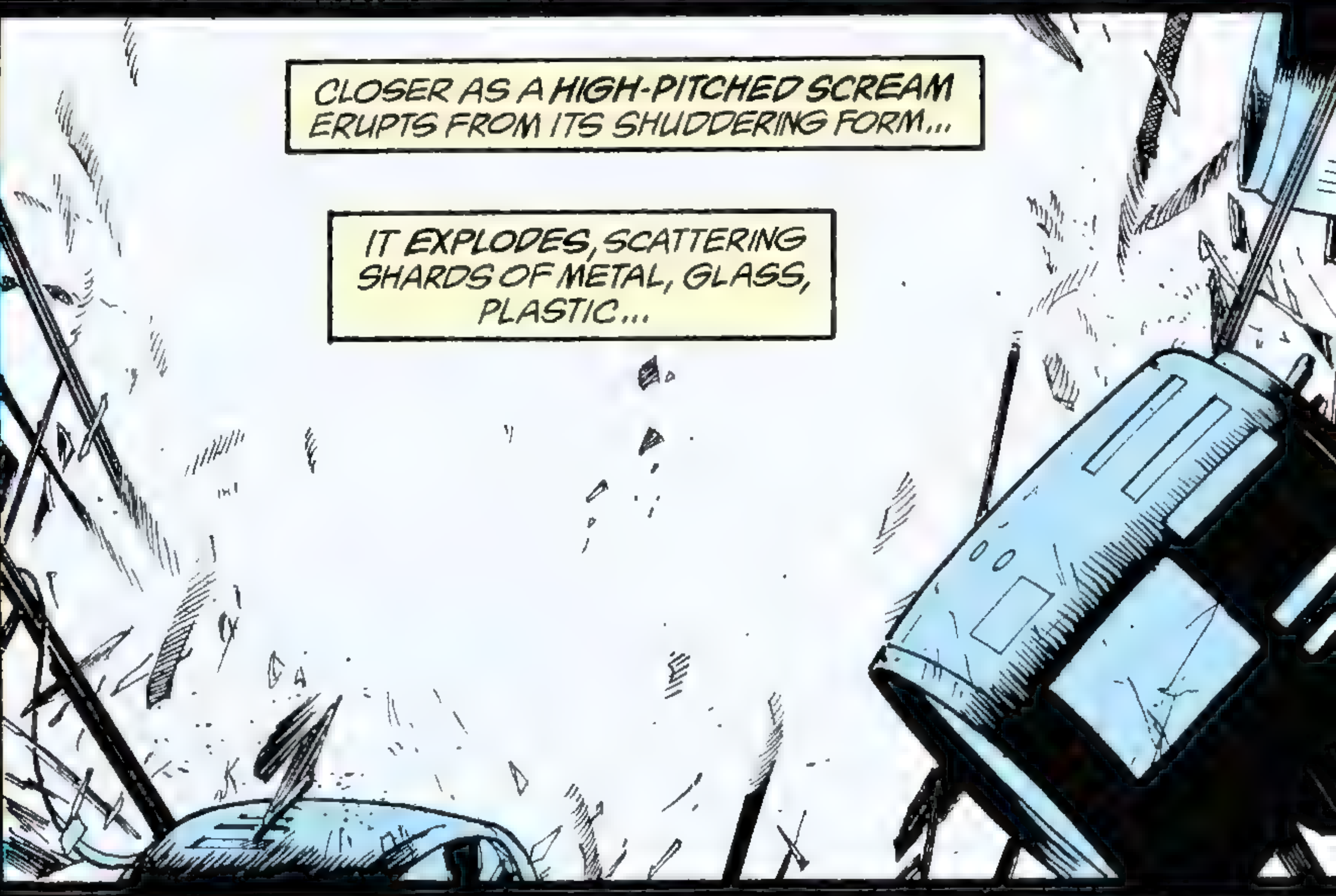
INT. STUDY.
SCRIPTWRITER
COMING TO...

CUT TO THE
CAMERA, THE CAMERA
WITH THE MADNESS...



WHY DID IT DO IT? HOW
DID IT CATCH THE
MADNESS? WE'LL
NEVER KNOW.

AS WE DOLLY IN,
CRACKS BEGIN TO
APPEAR ON ITS
SURFACE...



CLOSER AS A HIGH-PITCHED SCREAM
ERUPTS FROM ITS SHUDDERING FORM...

IT EXPLODES, SCATTERING
SHARDS OF METAL, GLASS,
PLASTIC...



AND THEN SILENCE. BEAT.
THEN, A BIRD SINGS,
IT'S OVER.

SLOWLY, THE SOUND
OF CHEERING, OF CELEBRATION,
OF RELEASE RISES FROM
THE STREETS...



IT'S OVER.
OR ALMOST...
CUT TO

EXT. TARA. SOUNDS OF CANNON
FIRE AND WARFARE IN DISTANCE.
FLAMES ROAR THROUGH A LARGE
PLANTATION HOUSE. DEATH
THROES OF THE OLD SOUTH.

OH, RHETT, AH
MUST HAVE BEEN CRAZY...
AH LOVE YOU, RHETT...

FRANKLY, MY
DEAR, I'M GLAD
YOU DO.

KISS ME...



HOLD IT! CUT!
THAT'S NOT FAIR, YOU
BASTARD.

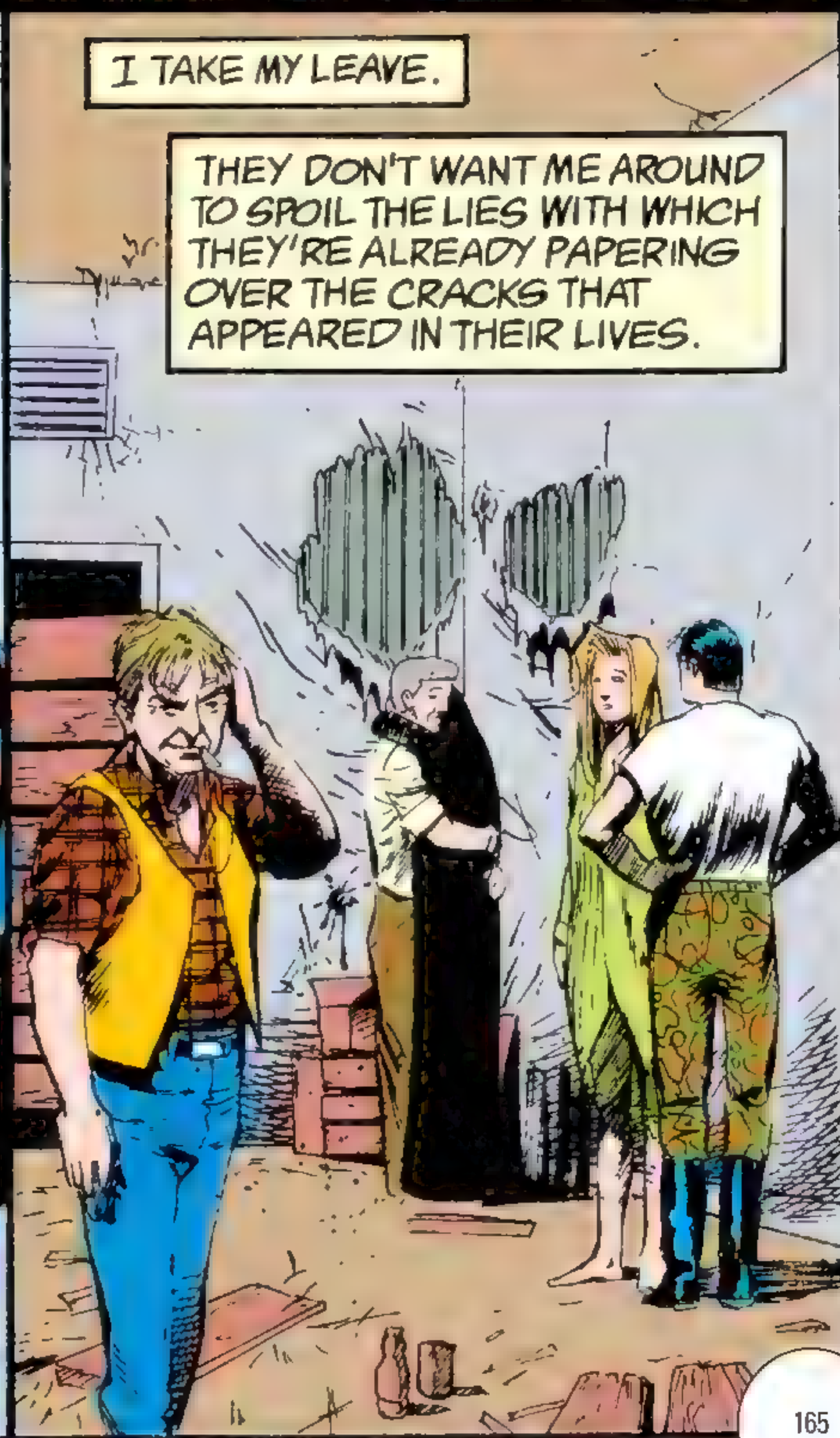
MAYBE IF YOU
LOOKED LIKE CLARK
GABLE I WOULDN'T
MIND...

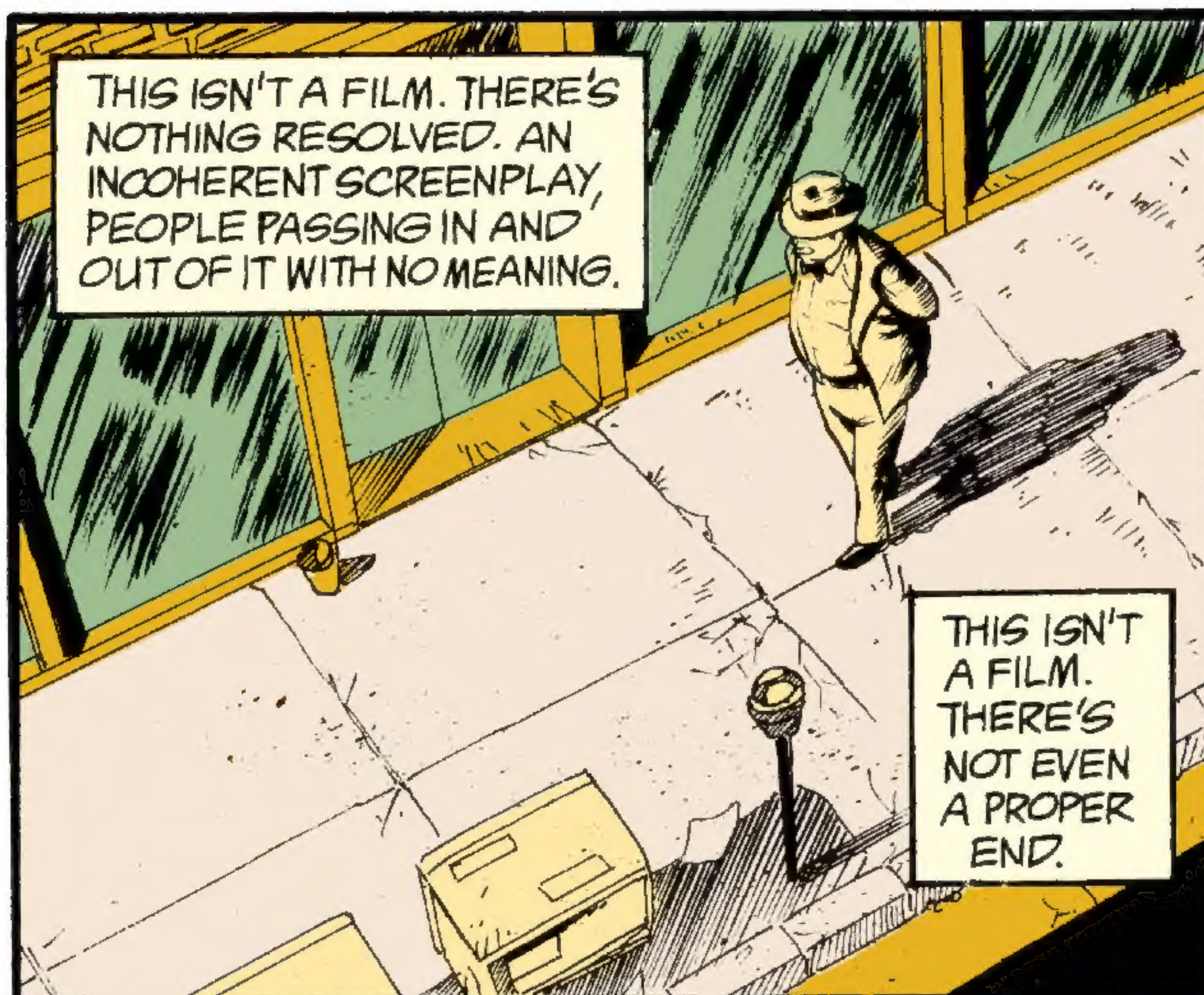
YOU'RE NOT
EXACTLY VIVIEN LEIGH
YOURSELF.

COME ON,
WE SHOULD GO
TO THE STUDIO.
FIND THAT
CAMERA.

I TAKE MY LEAVE.

THEY DON'T WANT ME AROUND
TO SPOIL THE LIES WITH WHICH
THEY'RE ALREADY PAPERING
OVER THE CRACKS THAT
APPEARED IN THEIR LIVES.



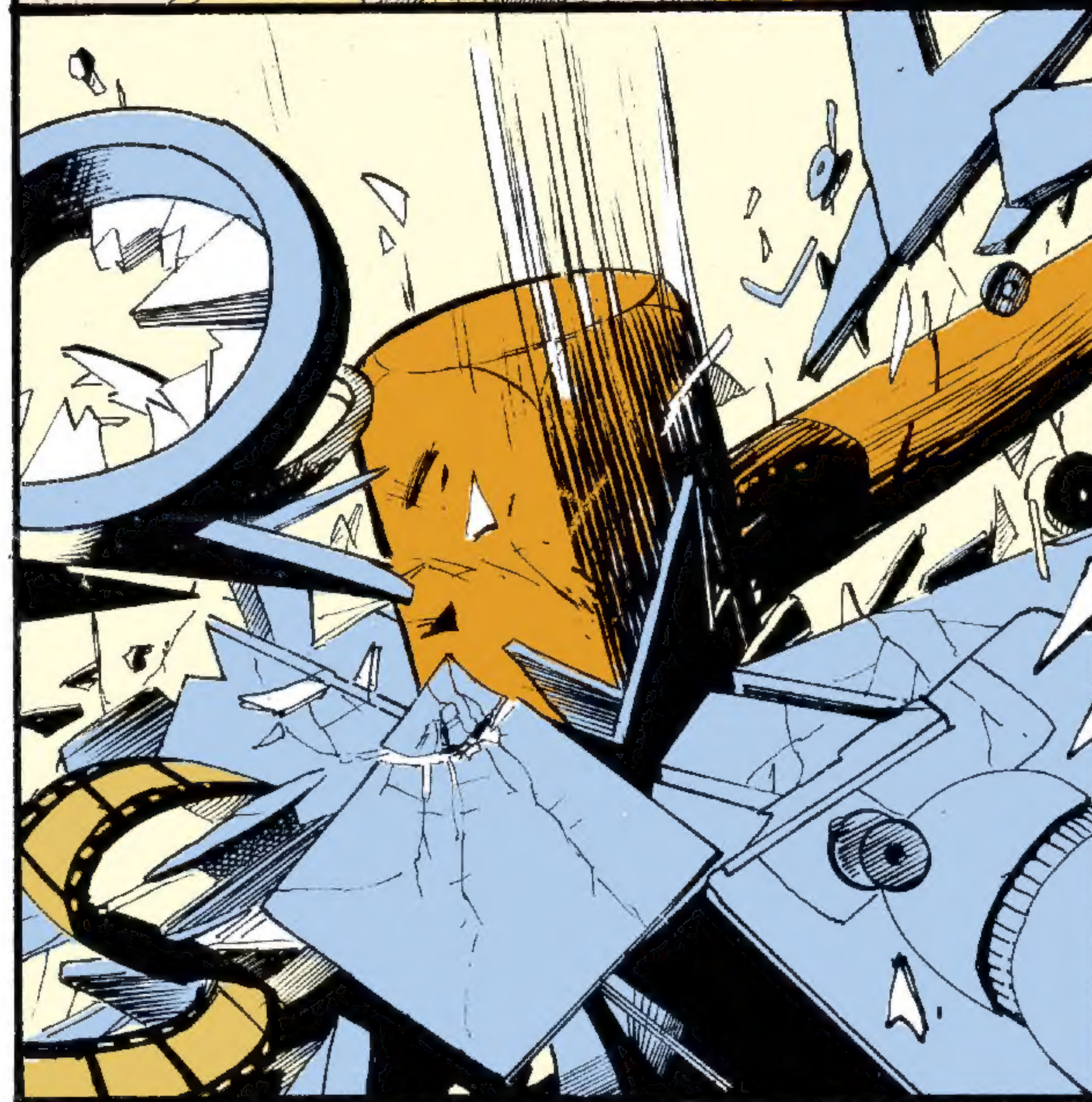


THIS ISN'T A FILM. THERE'S NOTHING RESOLVED. AN INCOHERENT SCREENPLAY, PEOPLE PASSING IN AND OUT OF IT WITH NO MEANING.

THIS ISN'T A FILM. THERE'S NOT EVEN A PROPER END.



I THINK I'D LIKE TO SEE *THE THAMES* AGAIN BEFORE I DIE.



CAN'T BREAK IT UP ANY MORE THAN THAT.

WHY DID IT GO CRAZY, ANYHOW?



WHO KNOWS? MAYBE ALL THE SHIT IT HAD TO FILM PLUS THE TOUCH OF THE *AMERICAN SCREAM*...

IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER WHY. IT JUST WAS.

GUESS THIS CHANGES THINGS, THOUGH. IF INANIMATE OBJECTS CAN GET THE MADNESS...



IT'S TOO BIZARRE. JUST THINK, A MAD WINDOW! A CRAZY SIDEWALK! JESUS!

AN INSANE COFFEE CUP. A SCHIZOPHRENIC SHIRT...





The madness
is rising...

...and only one
man can stop it:

the shade changing man

A strange visitor from the dimension of Meta, Rac Shade has been given the task of trying to stem the growing tide of Earth's insanity, which has created an interdimensional "Area of Madness" threatening both Meta and Earth with chaos.

But upon breaching the barrier between worlds, Shade is trapped in the body of serial killer Troy Grenzer and finds himself on the run from the law as an escaped murderer. Unable to return home, Shade must rely on the help of the one person crazy enough to believe his story — Kathy George, the daughter of Grenzer's last victims — as he heads towards a confrontation with the growing embodiment of national psychosis: The American Scream.

*As one of the founding titles of the VERTIGO imprint, SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN exploded all the preconceptions of what a super-hero comic could be and launched the now-legendary careers of writer **Peter Milligan** (HUMAN TARGET, GREEK STREET, X-Force) and artist **Chris Bachalo** (DEATH: THE HIGH COST OF LIVING, STEAMPUNK, Excalibur). THE AMERICAN SCREAM collects the first six issues of this long-demanded series and reintroduces the remarkable, hallucinatory world that it brought to life.*

vertigo.comics.com
suggested for mature readers

SON OF ULTRON

"THIS FAN...
THIS MONSTER!"

